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AN OFFICIAL ORGAN *of the* NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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# COLLEGE ENGLISH

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## *The Ordeal of Van Wyck Brooks*

OSCAR CARGILL<sup>1</sup>

REFERRING to the fact that he began to write criticism before he was mature enough to set up as a critic and continued to write it even after some of his limitations were painfully exposed, Van Wyck Brooks observes in *Opinions of Oliver Allston*, "I conducted my education in public." Ruefully he adds that he has had to "pay" for his indiscretions. There is, nevertheless, in his career something that makes sense to the claim of "wondrous" wisdom for the man in Mother Goose who had to scratch his eyes out in the bramblebush before he could scratch them in again. If the critic is matured chiefly in active controversy—the bramblebush of literature—no critic ever chose the right way to eminence with more sagacity than did Brooks. Whereas our modern Dromios discreetly pick the soft assent of flattering reviews, engineering their way to fame by pyramiding sofa pillows, Van Wyck Brooks brashly struck out with a book-length consideration of the cultural limitations of the American people, an exercise in judgment (obviously) that no young man of twenty-two is prepared to

perform. *The Wine of the Puritans*, with its very self-conscious date line, "London, October, 1908," has its specious *Weltanschauung*, however—the point of view of an expatriate whose objectivity is as fresh as the labels on his luggage, Brooks having gone abroad after his graduation from Harvard the previous year.

Patterned upon those disquisitions in aesthetics which Oscar Wilde was wont to put into dialogue form, like "The Critic as Artist," or better yet, "The Decay of Lying," *The Wine of the Puritans* is arranged as a conversation between two very audacious young men, the author and his alter ego, who bears the absurd name of Græling. Lolling at their ease on the shores of a blue Italian bay on a midsummer afternoon, these two sophisticates observe with perfect complacency "another shipload of Italians going to take our places at home" and deliver themselves of syllogisms on the limitations of their native land. The burden of their plaint is that Americans are all "grown-up," are all weaned of emotions. "We are the most purely intelligent people in the world," one ego solemnly avers. Our angular and pure ra-

<sup>1</sup> New York University; author of *Intellectual America*.

tionality is the result of our having had no childhood as a nation; unlike the founders of the European countries, who were "children," our forebears were adult Puritans who, coming to this continent, had to concentrate immediately and with all their force upon the problem of mere survival, so that they at once erected efficiency in living into the first of the virtues, and such it has remained ever since. Americans have never cultivated "those instincts and sensibilities which produce a genial superiority to the hard facts of life. . . . American history is so unlovable!" declaims the tyro. Now Wilde had found—so he had reported in "Impressions of America"—Puritanism rampant in this country; he had maintained, in "The Decay of Lying," that our "commercialism" and our "indifference to the poetical side of things" both spring from our accepting the incredible George Washington of the cherry-tree legend as our national hero—hint enough for Brooks's comment on the unattractiveness of American history. Indeed, in Wilde's glorification of sensibility over sense, and of Art over Nature, may be apprehended the mood of *The Wine of the Puritans*.

But did the reviewers mock the young author as a refurbished Reginald Bunthorne? Did they twit him with a desire "to shine in the high aesthetic line as a man of culture rare"? No, indeed—Brooks's strictures were taken with great seriousness. The *New York Times* held that, on the whole, the blows dealt by the book were "meted out with justice, and they go to the right spot"; the *Nation* discovered that the chapters constituted "a whole sheaf of really excellent little sermons," and it hoped piously that "the right people" would read them. Following in the wake of the generally favorable reaction by the metro-

politan press, the *Literary Digest* ran a laudatory article on the writer and his book, and Van Wyck Brooks seemed definitely "made" as an author. To be sure, the *Dial*, forced to review *The Wine of the Puritans* in April, 1910, as an important publication which it had missed, found the texture of the book "altogether too thin" for its pretentiousness, but this tardy dissent did no harm. By sheer audacity, for no other explanation is adequate, Brooks had swept over the doubts in his charge on fame.

One of the "high-brow" magazines, the *Forum*, now beckoned to Brooks. His first article, "Notes on Vernon Lee," contributed in April, 1911, attempts to define the function of criticism and to appraise the achievement of a neglected practitioner. "Criticism," Van Wyck Brooks declares, "surveys the land" for art. It peers ahead and suggests the direction which art should take. "Creative criticism . . . means the treatment of works and intellects and periods not in relation to themselves and each other, but in relation to universal life." The creative critic will not "confine himself to a certain branch of art, or to art exclusively at all." He will take "all life as his province." Walter Pater was a creative critic, for all that he wrote illustrates his view of life; whereas John Addington Symonds was not, for he caught now at this theme and now at that, never making a synthesis. "Symonds had no gift for conclusions." From this preliminary settling and illustration of values, Brooks turns to his chief task, which is to extol Miss Violet Paget, who wrote under the name of Vernon Lee. As well-equipped with facts as Pater and Symonds, Vernon Lee has ranged beyond the purely aesthetic interests of her compeers, writing with authority and wisdom on a great variety of subjects but writing so graciously that

"she seems not to have asked for austere consideration." Granting that Brooks has taken mere diversity for range and has overestimated Vernon Lee's scholarship, one feels in this essay, nevertheless, the promise of a highly useful and dignified career. Who in America, up to that time, had as broad a conception of the function of criticism? Who expressed himself more pungently?

To match definition with accomplishment, Brooks offered studies of Henri Frederic Amiel and of J. A. Symonds in the *Forum*. In regard to the former, Brooks raises the question whether Geneva, with its concomitants of Calvinism and the French language, did not have a "paralyzing" effect. Brooks found that Symonds had two great limitations: a defect of power and a defect of coherence. Citing first Symonds' repressed youth and then his enthusiasm for *Leaves of Grass*, Brooks asks if the resulting attitudes are not "hectic." "Can the cosmic enthusiasm, which is really the joy of living, exist healthily in those who are not healthy?" In this dissection of Symonds, Brooks made one of the very early, if not the earliest, critical analyses in our literature which had Freudian or near-Freudian reference. When Mitchell Kennerley issued this study as a little brochure, it was received with general acclaim. "Mr. Brooks' essay," the *Nation* averred, is an excellent bit of criticism, written with sympathy, discrimination, and distinction." The usually well-contained Boston *Evening Transcript* waxed ecstatic. "As a piece of critical writing," its reviewer said of the essay, "it surpasses anything of the kind done by a contemporary American critic, and in point of values and critical style, it is equal to the best work of a similar kind that has come to us from England. . . ."

Well might Van Wyck Brooks cherish

these encomiums, for they were the last full-blown bouquets he was to receive for twenty-two years. Upon the publication of his next work, a brochure, *The World of H. G. Wells* (1915), he got his first thorough drubbing from the reviewers, who continued to dog him for nearly a quarter of a century. In this instance there was ample warrant for every bruise that he received, but the thing which most aroused the reviewers' ire was Brooks's insistence that H. G. Wells is the Matthew Arnold of the twentieth century: "Wells on Criticism, Wells on Education, Wells on Politics and the nostrums of Liberalism, Wells even on Religion, speaks with the voice of Arnold. Everywhere there is the same fine dissatisfaction, the same nice discrimination, the same faith in ideas and standards, the same dislike of heated bungling. . . ." It was not enough to ticket this as patently inept, the bumble of a critic still in his twenties; the reviewers had to flay their victim alive. The *Transcript*, which had just exalted him, now smote him hip and thigh, concluding with the statement that Brooks "is rarely if ever convincing in anything he says about his subject." Professor Stuart P. Sherman, then an ardent disciple of Arnold, was summoned by the *Nation* to do an interment, and he buried poor Brooks under a mound of scholarship meant to be visible in seven counties. Never was the want of charity or humor in American reviewing more obvious.

Brooks's reaction to this general assault is somehow typical of his career. Dutch and Irish strains in his ancestry kept him from being crushed or buried; nevertheless he visibly yielded ground. Instead of widening his orbit, he concentrated in the area in which he had first won fame and did three more books in



the spirit of *The Wine of the Puritans—America's Coming-of-Age* (1915), *Letters and Leadership* (1918), and *The Literary Life in America* (1921). The violence with which our cultural limitations are therein set forth conceals the retreat of the critic while suggesting his impatience with the restrictions of the enforced assignment. Our people, declares Brooks, send up to heaven "the stench of atrophied personality." Jonathan Edwards, Hawthorne, and Emerson had "spectral natures"; Bryant was hardly a personality—he was merely "a somewhat eminent personage." Little survives of Lowell save the impression of his size—"he was a sizable man; he remains a sizable figure, but one that has gone curiously blank." Poe was "unreal" and Longfellow "a sort of expurgated German student." Whitman alone, "a great vegetable of a man," gives us the sense of "something organic in American life." In these books the most challenging critical observation is the assertion of a dichotomy in our national existence. During the first three generations of our history, Brooks notes, in *America's Coming-of-Age*, that the man of affairs was also the spiritual mentor of the people, but in the eighteenth century a rift appeared between the two which has become a kind of crevasse, separating our society into the incompatible types of "high-brow" and "low-brow," the inflexibly virtuous and the too flexibly practical. Brooks took this famous distinction, as he confesses, from the vernacular; in pressing home its significance, however, he presented some of the sharpest antitheses in our history and in our life: the contrast between the austere Jonathan Edwards and the practical Benjamin Franklin serving him as no more apt illustration of his thesis than the divergencies between university ethics and business

practices, American culture and American humor, academic pedantry and pavement slang, good government and Tammany, desiccated scholarship and stark utility. Schizophrenia on a vast scale is responsible for the want of color in our intellectual life.

Reaction to these books took a definite pattern of dwindling appreciation and sales. *America's Coming-of-Age* was applauded in some quarters, though equally strongly dissented from in others, but interest fell away with *Letters and Leadership* and almost apathy greeted *The Literary Life in America*. More important, there was now perceived a weakness in the man beyond immediate repair. It was not the superficiality of his reading or his love for facile generalizing (to classify all Americans as "high-brow" or "low-brow" is as infantile a mental operation as to divide all mankind into the "lost" and the "saved"), but his inability to recognize genius at his very elbow. Despite the fact that Dreiser, Robinson, Frost, Edna Millay, Vachel Lindsay, and others were receiving elsewhere the recognition due them, they get no mention in *America's Coming-of-Age*; the contemporary scene to Brooks is still "a vast Sargasso Sea—a prodigious welter of unconscious life, swept by the groundswells of half-conscious emotion." There is allusion to the *Spoon River Anthology* and the "monsters" of Dreiser's novels in *Letters and Leadership*, but Brooks defines this new literature still as "a vast flood of undisciplined emotionalism"—to which the critic should furnish direction. One reviewer put succinctly the general suspicion when he declared that, for all Brooks's "apparent enthusiasm for the artist, he does not seem vitally interested in art when it appears." After he had committed the egregious blunder of presenting Ned Winsett, in *The Liter-*



ary *Life in America*, as the typical American literary man, he could no longer pose as the militant leader of the younger generation—the protests were too loud. His popularity was gone.

Forced to take a new tack, Van Wyck Brooks laid it from a buoy he had previously dropped down. Since his pioneer analytical study of J. A. Symonds, numerous writers here and abroad had given Freudianism an authority it had not then possessed. Perhaps a series of psychoanalytical studies could be counted on with most assurance to restore him to favor with his contemporaries, especially his younger contemporaries. Had not the Symonds sketch won him universal acclaim? Very much wishing himself out of the bramblebush, Brooks began a sequence of Freudian biographies—*The Ordeal of Mark Twain* (1920), *The Pilgrimage of Henry James* (1925), and *The Life of Emerson* (1932). His new venture, however, led to a prodigious buffeting. It is doubtful if any book in our literary annals has produced more adverse comment than *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*; perhaps Charles Beard's *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* got a more ferocious reception, but it has made converts, whereas Brooks's thesis is about as far from acceptance today as when it was first uttered. That Mark Twain was a literary Samson shorn of his power by the genteel snippets cut from his locks by Mrs. Clemens and Howells has been denied by investigators whose motives have ranged from chivalry to cussedness, and from emotional resentment to a passion for truth. Twain no longer appears as a potential Rabelais or Voltaire, but rather as Top Kick in the dubious company of Major Pond, Colonel Ingersoll, and General Grant. That we know Twain better is the result of research by Minnie

Brashear, Edward Wagenknecht, De Lancey Ferguson, and others, and the publication of Twainiana by Bernard DeVoto, Samuel Charles Webster, and still others, most of whom have fired whole broadsides at Van Wyck Brooks—thereby establishing incontrovertibly his generative power in starting analysis of the great American humorist. But Brooks shrank before the savagery of the assault: *The Pilgrimage of Henry James* is timid in its statement of thesis and *The Life of Emerson*, which starts with a remarkable portrait of Emerson's aunt, Miss Mary Moody Emerson, who is contrasted sharply with the sickly boy, her nephew (as if Brooks meant to develop a Freudian thesis out of this relationship), dwindles into a reverent and almost conventional biography of the seer of Concord. The fact was noted and the book forgotten in a day.

Declining fame, despite the most strenuous efforts to rescue his fortunes, was as much responsible as ill health, possibly, for the spiritual depression into which Brooks is supposed to have settled as the twenties faded. Nothing he had done in many years had received the general indorsement of his early work. Now a collected edition of his casual essays, *Sketches in Criticism* (1932), produced only perfunctory comment. It would seem that the reviewers were of one mind that they were dealing with a writer who had ceased to be a force. And much in the book confirmed that point of view. It opened with an essay, valedictory in its tone and self-pitying in its personal reference, which alluded to the critical movement in America as a recent past event and commiserated the critic for being taken "as an undesirable alien, even a traitor." Brooks bewailed his utter loneliness, declaring "he could have written ten times more and better if only

someone . . . . had wished him do so." Too many of the seats of authority in this country were occupied by "hardy vulgarians" while "the aging men who [had] contributed most to the real thought of the time" crept about in corners with scarcely the will to live.

Van Wyck Brooks reached the very bottom of his fortunes with *Sketches in Criticism*. The prospect was dark and he was at loose ends. Then, fortuitously, he discovered new resources of spirit. Called upon to edit the *Journal* and the *Letters* of Gamaliel Bradford after the latter's death, Brooks found in the record of the fight made for literary survival by that long-ailing and neurotic man the springs of courage which he himself seemed to need. No one can read Brooks's Preface to the *Journal*, with its comparison of Bradford's struggles with the hardships endured by Prescott and Parkman, without thinking of Brooks himself. Resolutely, he again reviewed his career, settling at last upon the boldest definition of criticism he had ever struck off, that in the essay on Vernon Lee, as most likely, if put into practice, to redeem his fame. Especially must he have reflected on the potentialities of a single passage in that essay; of Vernon Lee he had written:

. . . . Her impulse came from a study of facts, facts accepted and half forgotten and fertilized with fresh facts until her mind was unable to generate a barren or superficial thought not hung about and garlanded with associations. With her, the process gave birth not to opinions but to radiations, sudden risings to the surface and the sunlight of strange fragments of human experience bearing with them odors and evanescent hues and curious forms that belong to the depths whence they have come: fragments really of those wraith-like existences we call race, history, tradition which in the hands of art become nations and periods. . . .

Here is as precise a formulation of what appears to be Brooks's aim in his

present large work, "the literary history of America," as could possibly be phrased. The purpose of the artist in *The Flowering of New England, 1815-1865*, (1936), in *New England Indian Summer, 1865-1915* (1940), and in *The World of Washington Irving* (1944) is to evoke all the poetic associations that a survey of the careers of our intellectuals can engender, to bring up into flashing sunlight all the scintillating facts that can be found about them, but to abjure their opinions, their ideas, and their thought and, so far as practicable, to offer no opinion of his own. But such a selective presentation of the surface manifestations of the creative life in America is not properly called a "history": it is a *legendry*, just as, in contrast with Don Seitz's study of Lincoln the politician (which certainly is a genuine historical study), Carl Sandburg's *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* is a *legendry*. Critics have lost too much respect for hagiography, but, with the public, the saint's life is still as satisfying an artistic creation as it ever was to its innovators. It calls, indeed, for a special talent. "When the sun rises, do you not see a round ball of fire somewhat like a guinea?" the poet Blake somewhere asks himself. "Oh, no. No!" he replies to his own question; "I see an innumerable company of the heavenly host shouting, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty!' I do not blame my corporeal eye. I see *through* it, not *with* it." At long last, Van Wyck Brooks, who once saw with his corporeal eye only some eminent personages who had practiced letters in his native land, now beholds an innumerable company of the heavenly host and, more important, is able to share his bright vision with the general public if not with the intellectuals.

Designate this, if you will, a reversal

and a retreat, as much of Brooks's career has been, it is nevertheless the completion of an education. Van Wyck Brooks has come at painfully what most American intellectuals have yet to learn—the calling of letters is still a priesthood, and, however shoddy the practitioner, if he is represented as wholly shoddy, he has been seen but with the corporeal eye. The Greeks rightly condemned Alcibiades for mutilating the Hermae, though no sophisticated Athenian held the statues, probably, as cult-objects. Unless there be reserved some degree of reverence for past performers, literature cannot flourish. Brooks undeniably has painted too many shimmering angels into his panorama of nineteenth century America—that is, too many for an appreciative and discriminating age—but in an age deficient in appreciation or reverence (which must precede discrimination), surely not too

many. And, as an expiatory act, not too many. That he has not broken his pattern with rough commentary is a personal triumph not enough appreciated; with his passionate temperament and his love of generalizing he must have had to exercise extraordinary restraint. Possibly he could not have done so had he not invented the opinionated Oliver Allston to help him out with his handy notebooks. Be that as it may, he has produced by some miracle a perfect mosaic. The eagerness with which the public has taken up his legendry bespeaks its eternal hunger for heroes. Better to have satisfied that need than to have formulated criteria which artists would strain toward for aeons. Perhaps the only way in which the artists of our generation can learn to see *through*, rather than *with*, their corporeal eyes is the process of scratching them out and in again in the bramble-bush.

## Melville's Picture of Emerson and Thoreau in "The Confidence-Man"

EGBERT S. OLIVER<sup>1</sup>

EARLY in 1849 Melville spent three months in Boston. After hearing an Emerson lecture he wrote to his friend Evert Duyckinck, on February 24: "Say what they will, he's a great man."

Evert Duyckinck would not permit such a judgment to pass without challenge. On March 3 Melville wrote to Duyckinck a more detailed comment on Emerson:

<sup>1</sup> Professor of English, Willamette University, Salem, Oregon; editor of the recently published *Giving Form to Ideas*. (For review see p. 106.)

Yet I think Emerson is more than a brilliant fellow. . . . Swear he is a humbug—then is he no common humbug. . . . To my surprise, I found him quite intelligible. . . .

I could readily see in Emerson, notwithstanding his merit, a gaping flaw. It was, the insinuation, that had he lived in those days when the world was made, he might have offered some valuable suggestions.

Melville's interest in Emerson continued for years. He read Emerson's essays with critical interest, in or after 1861, as is attested by the marked copies from his library, with their marginal

notes. Through his associations with Hawthorne in the Berkshires he had ample occasion to get Hawthorne's partly sympathetic but generally aloof reactions to the Concord sage. However, regardless of how Hawthorne might or might not have served as a link between Emerson and Melville, it is, I think, demonstrably true that Melville used Emerson as the pattern of the mystic in his *The Confidence-Man*. The mystic resembles Emerson in posture and physical appearance, in manner and in public associations. Moreover, the mystic's conversation bears a relationship, in general and in many particulars, to the ideas and phrasing of Emerson's *Nature*.

The mystic appears in chapter xxxvi, with no forewarnings. He adds little directly to the very thin thread of plot in the story; instead, the several chapters in which the mystic and his follower figure make up an interlude in the action. Indeed, the six chapters of this episode have as their justification the fact that they add to the variety and scope of Melville's satirical caricature of the American scene.

In contrast to the preceding characters in the book the mystic is described in detail, as though Melville were taking particular care with his picture. The details are exact, and the general impression explicit. The mystic is

a blue-eyed man, sandy-haired, and Saxon-looking; perhaps five-and-forty; tall, and, but for a certain angularity, well-made; little touch of the drawing-room about him, but a look of plain propriety of a Puritan sort, with a kind of farmer dignity. His age seemed betokened more by his brow, placidly thoughtful, than by his general aspect, which had that look of youthfulness in maturity, peculiar sometimes to habitual health of body, the original gift of nature, or in part the effect or reward of steady temperance of the passions, kept so, perhaps, by constitution as much as morality. A neat, comely, almost ruddy cheek, coolly fresh, like a

red clover-blossom at coolish dawn—the colour of warmth preserved by the virtue of chill. Toning the whole man, was one-knows-not-what of shrewdness and mythiness, strangely jumbled; in that way, he seemed a kind of cross between a Yankee peddler and a Tartar priest, though it seemed as if, at a pinch, the first would not in all probability play second fiddle to the last.

All this, it seems, is apparent to one who, for a moment, first sees the mystic. This much, at least, the cosmopolitan, a character of the story who is accosted by the mystic, gathers in one brief survey. The physical description of the man is very close to what an observer would have seen in a survey of Emerson in the middle of the century. Eyes, hair, height, build, posture, dignity, temperateness, coolness, and the combination of shrewdness and mysticalness—all are particularly similar in the mystic and in Emerson. "His eyes were very blue," wrote his son, Edward Waldo Emerson. His hair, formerly dark brown, was turning a sandy color by 1849. When Melville heard him lecture, at which time he was forty-six years old, Emerson had a strong appearance of being Saxon-looking.

The dual aspects of Emerson's nature were remarked by many people who knew him, but no observer summed up the opposing poles of his thinking more aptly than did Lowell in his often quoted *Fable for Critics*. Lowell speaks of Emerson's "Greek head on right Yankee shoulders" and emphasizes the contrast of "Olympus for one pole, for t'other the Exchange"; and he calls him a Plotinus-Montaigne, a coupling which would certainly attract Melville's attention. This contrast in Emerson's nature has become the standard biographical approach.

George Woodberry writes:

Emerson leaves a double image on the mind that has dwelt long upon his memory. He is a



shining figure as on some mount of Transfiguration; and he was a parochial man. In one aspect he is of kin with old Ionian philosophers. . . . ; in the other he is a Bostonian, . . . the creature of local environment.

Emerson's face, says Bliss Perry:

. . . is asymmetrical, seen from one side, it is that of a shrewd New England farmer; from the other, it is a face of a seer, a

"Prophetic soul of the wide world  
Dreaming on things to come."

Arthur Hugh Clough, Holmes, Hawthorne, and others saw this puzzling feature of Emerson. Hence Melville, in his picture of the Saxon-looking mystic, had ample reason for describing him as a mixture of Yankee peddler and Tartar priest.

In his letter on Emerson to Duyckinck, Melville commented on Emerson's lack of social warmth, his intellectuality. Melville often uses "brains" or intellectuality as a symbol for coldness, while "heart" indicates fellowship and warmth to him. In his personal copy of Emerson's *Essays*, read in 1861 or later, Melville was still impressed by this dual quality in the mystic sage. Annotating the passage in Emerson's essay, "The Poet," which begins, "Language is fossil poetry," Melville wrote:

This is admirable, as many other thoughts of Mr. Emerson's are. His gross and astonishing errors & illusions spring from a self-conceit so intensely intellectual and calm that at first one hesitates to call it by its right name. Another species of Mr. Emerson's errors, or rather blindness, proceeds from a defect in the region of the heart.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> William Braswell, "Melville as a Critic of Emerson," *American Literature*, IX, 331. Dr. Braswell apparently considered and rejected the possibilities of the mystic of *The Confidence-Man* being a picture of Emerson, for he says: "Carl Van Vechten's theory that *The Confidence-Man* is a satire on Transcendentalism seems to me unfounded" (p. 319n.). O. F. Matthiessen, in *American Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 472, n. 1, says: "It is quite possible that Melville may

Emerson's evaluation of himself included a recognition of this coldness of his own nature. "I was born cold," he wrote. "My bodily habit is cold. I shiver in and out; don't heat to the good purpose called enthusiasm a quarter so quick and kindly as my neighbors." His journal continued to carry complaints of this nature. "What is called a warm heart I have not." "I have not the kind affections of a pigeon."<sup>3</sup>

Melville on first contact with Emerson understood this deficiency in his nature. Thinking of his own jolly times with the group of writers who drank together in the Duyckinck home, Melville had written, in the letter previously quoted in part:

I was going to say something more—It was this.—You complain that Emerson tho' a denizen of the land of gingerbread, is above munching a plain cake in company of jolly fellows, & swiging [*sic*] off his ale like you & me. Ah, my dear sir, that's his misfortune, not his fault. His belly, sir, is in his chest, & his brains descend down into his neck, & offer an obstacle to a draught of ale or a mouthful of cake.<sup>4</sup>

When Melville described the mystic with the words "coolly" and "chill," he was but using an idea which he readily associated with Emerson. In *The Con-*

have remembered his impression of Emerson when making this sketch of a mystic in *The Confidence-Man*. My doctoral dissertation, "Melville and the Idea of Progress" (University of Washington, 1939; unpublished), devoted three pages to a survey of Melville's use of Emerson and Thoreau in *The Confidence-Man*.

<sup>3</sup> Ludwig Lewisohn, *The Story of American Literature* (Modern Library ed.), p. 109. Lewisohn devotes several pages to an analysis of this aspect of Emerson's character. Lowell's *Fable for Critics* contained the couplet:

"E. sits in a mystery calm and intense,  
And looks coolly around him with sharp common-sense."

<sup>4</sup> The letter is printed in full in Willard Throp, *Herman Melville* (American Book Company, 1938), pp. 371-73.



*fidence-Man* the cosmopolitan invites the mystic to sit down and "take some of this wine." The mystic, with the kind of allusion and reference common to Emerson, replies:

To invite me to sit down with you is hospitable . . . and hospitality being fabled to be of oriental origin, and forming, as it does, the subject of a pleasing Arabian romance, as well as being a very romantic thing in itself—hence I always hear the expressions of hospitality with pleasure. But, as for the wine, my regard for that beverage is so extreme, and I am so fearful of letting it sate me, that I keep my love for it in the lasting condition of untried abstraction. Briefly, I quaff immense draughts of wine from the page of Hafiz, but wine from a cup I seldom as much as sip.<sup>5</sup>

As the mystic sat down in response to the invitation to drink, he sat there "purely and coldly radiant as a prism. It seemed as if one could almost hear him vitreously chime and ring." The cosmopolitan calls for a goblet of ice water. "Ice it well, waiter," said he." When brought, the goblet of iced water was refreshing to the mystic, "its very coldness, as with some is the case, proving not entirely uncongenial." After drinking, the mystic speaks "in a manner the most cool, self-possessed, and matter-of-fact possible."

A stranger, "a haggard, inspired-looking man now approached—a crazy beggar, asking alms under the form of peddling a rhapsodical tract." One might think that the rhapsodical, inspired-looking beggar might find a sympathetic response from the mystic; but not so. The mystic has just been talking in a high-flown, idealistic vein of how "Pharaoh's poorest brick-maker lies prouder in his

rag than the Emperor of all the Russias in his hollands," but such sentiments do not dispose him to act with favor toward the actual man in need before him. The cosmopolitan, in direct contrast, spoke to him kindly, gave him a shilling, and promised to read the tract. "But the stranger [the mystic] sat more like a cold prism than ever, while an expression of keen Yankee cuteness, now replacing his former mystical one, lent added icicles to his aspect."

Melville's picture of the mystic is one of a Yankee and an oracular mystic, a combination of shrewd, self-protecting mistrust and of misty mythicalness. He speaks grandly of abstract beauty and trust, worthiness, virtue, and beautiful souls; yet with Yankee doubt he mistrusts the actual man.

The mystic, after a dozen pages of conversation, is given the name Mark Winsome. This name is particularly adaptable to Emerson in a double sense. Melville's delight in puns—especially, too, puns of an enigmatical character—is one aspect of his work which has never been adequately explored. Melville's letter to Duyckinck in 1849 regarding Emerson recognizes the fact of Emerson's enlisting followers; so, also, does Lowell's *Fable for Critics*—in fact, such was the general impression of Emerson held by those who knew him. He could, and did, *win some* disciples. Also, one might truly say: "Emerson's *winsome* voice, smile, charm, manner, all combined to give him a wide reputation for winsomeness, especially as a lecturer."

But Melville does not stop with presenting a fairly recognizable portrait of Emerson in the character Mark Winsome: he also puts the ideas of Emerson in an exaggerated and caricatured form into the mouth of the mystic. Mark Winsome has swallowed, but not very thor-

<sup>5</sup> Emerson quotes from Hafiz or mentions him twenty-five times in his published works, according to the count of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. Emerson's general abstinence from drink was well known to Duyckinck, Hawthorne, and Melville—all of whom enjoyed a sociable punch bowl.

oughly digested, Emerson's *Nature*. Melville's use of this little book as a basis for the mystic's conversation does not come from any casual and distant association. The argument of the mystic in practically every point comes from *Nature*—by suggestion, by association of ideas, by direct condensation, or by distorted synopsis. This famous essay was used deliberately, and in using it Melville offers a criticism of the nature of transcendentalism.

Emerson's *Nature* is too rhapsodic and too much a blanket indorsement of nature for a man of Melville's temperament. He questions the beneficence of nature. Emerson is philosophical and general in his approach. He lays down conclusions and then supports them by an appeal to particulars. Emerson sees, for instance, a lesson taught by nature in debt, for "nature is a discipline."

Debt, grinding debt, whose iron face the widow, the orphan, and the sons of genius fear and hate—debt, which consumes so much time, which so cripples and disheartens a great spirit with cares that seem so base, is a preceptor whose lessons cannot be forgone, and is needed most by those who suffer from it most.

Such a cold view is far from the warm-hearted humanity and charity Melville admired. He had in his own life struggled too much with poverty and debt to appreciate his need for such struggle. His personal attitude was far different from that suggested by Emerson's coldly impersonal statement. His satirical reply to such thought is to present an individual case, the beggar who is befriended by the cosmopolitan and scorned by the coldly idealistic mystic.

Throughout *Nature* runs a strong note of trust and acceptance.

Undoubtedly we have no questions to ask which are unanswerable. We must trust the perfection of the creation. . . .

Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue. . . .

Beauty, in its largest and profoundest sense, is one expression for the universe. . . .

An enraged man is a lion, a cunning man is a fox, a firm man is a rock, a learned man is a torch. A lamb is innocence; a snake is subtle spite. . . .

There is no object so foul that intense light will not make beautiful. . . . Even the corpse has its own beauty . . . almost all the individual forms are agreeable to the eye . . . the acorn, . . . the egg, . . . the lion's claw, the serpent. . . .

The moral law lies at the center of nature and radiates to the circumference. . . .

In leading up to his often cited passage descriptive of the mystical union of the self with God, Emerson uses the words: "In the woods, too, a man casts off his years, as the snake his slough, and at what period soever of life is always a child." After a few lines he continues:

I am the lover of uncontained and immortal beauty. In the wilderness, I find something more dear and connate than in streets or villages. In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature.

These few quotations from Emerson's *Nature* give the various elements for a conversation to develop between the cosmopolitan and the mystic. The cosmopolitan, in a Socratic manner and with the irony of overstatement, feigns to fall in with the idea of the mystic. He says:

Yes, with you and Schiller, I am pleased to believe that beauty is at bottom incompatible with ill, and therefore am so eccentric as to have confidence in the latent benignity of that beautiful creature, the rattlesnake, whose lithe neck and burnished maze of tawny gold, as he sleekly curls aloft in the sun, who on the prairie can behold without wonder?

Melville here, as he frequently does, leaves the generalization to stab at a particular point. He was acquainted with the use of *reductio ad absurdum*, and he applies it here.

As the cosmopolitan spoke his words concerning the rattlesnake,

he seems so to enter into their spirit—as some earnest descriptive speakers will—as unconsciously to wreath his form and sidelong crest his head, till he all but seemed the creature described. Meantime, the stranger regarded him with little surprise apparently though with much contemplativeness of a mystical sort and presently said: "When charmed by the beauty of that viper did it never occur to you to change personalities with him? to feel what it was to a snake? to glide unsuspected in grass? to sting, to kill at a touch; your whole beautiful body one iridescent scabbard of death?"<sup>6</sup>

Emerson's use of the word "connate" and the phrase "as beautiful as his own nature" might have helped to suggest this personification. Moreover, the question of "accountability" of moral law in nature is continued, with the rattlesnake as a text. If it is accountable, "I need not say," said the cosmopolitan, "that such accountability is neither to you, not me, nor the Court of Common Pleas, but to something superior."

Emerson had urged that the questions we have suggested to us can be answered by nature. Melville was more skeptical. Is the rattlesnake's accountability manifest in nature? Even, is man's accountability manifest, though we all feel that man is accountable? This question, says the cosmopolitan, is "a *reductio ad absurdum*, proving the objection vain." Then he continued:

<sup>6</sup> Emerson, in the closing paragraph to *Nature*, wrote: "What we are, that only can we seek." Also he included the sentences which might well attract Melville's attention: "Each creature is only a modification of the other; the likeness in them is more than the difference, and their radical law is one and the same. . . . Every such truth is the absolute Ens seen from one side. But it has innumerable sides." *Nature* uses snakes as examples four times.

But if now you consider what capacity for mischief there is in a rattlesnake (observe, I do not charge it with being mischievous, I but say it has the capacity), could you well avoid admitting that that would be no symmetrical view of the universe which should maintain that, while to man it is forbidden to kill, without judicial cause, his fellow, yet the rattle-snake has an implied permit of unaccountability to murder any creature it takes capricious umbrage at—man included?—But [he breaks off the talk] this is no genial talk. . . .

This abrupt termination of the rattlesnake discussion with the use of the word "genial" recalls one of Emerson's more airy sentences: "How calmly and genially the mind apprehends one after another the laws of physics!"

Melville's mystic, while the snake conversation continued, had found—even as Emerson might have—"another beautiful truth" in the fact of the snake's rattle,

a sound, as I have been told, like the shaking together of small, dry skulls in a tune of the Waltz of Death. . . . So that whoever is destroyed by a rattle-snake, or other harmful agent, it is his own fault. He should have respected the label. Hence the significant passage in Scripture, "Who will pity the charmer that is bitten with a serpent?"

The cosmopolitan is blunt in his reply: "I would pity him." Thus Melville gets another opportunity to emphasize the coldness of this abstract idealism and to assert that the heart is a necessary organ in man. "Let casuists decide the casuistry, but the compassion the heart decides for itself," the cosmopolitan asserts.

The mystic at one place in the conversation is made to raise a question "with infantile intellectuality." This use of the word "infantile" would be difficult to explain were it not that Melville was jesting, and Emerson's *Nature* supplies the justification.

To speak truly, few adult persons can see nature. . . . The sun illuminates only the eye

of the man, but shines into the eye and the heart of the child. The lover of nature is he . . . who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood.

Emerson later speaks too of "the wisdom of children."

There is in this chapter on the mystic some fun with the kind of classical allusion and quotation in which Emerson frequently indulged.

"I conjecture him to be what, among the ancient Egyptians, was called a —" using some unknown word.

"A —! And what is that?"

"A — is what Proclus, in a little note to his third book on the theology of Plato, defines as —" coming out with a sentence of Greek.<sup>7</sup>

Later the mystic is saying in what he professes to be a direct answer:

"Briefly, then, and clearly, because, as before said, I conjecture him to be what, among the ancient Egyptians —"

"Pray, now," earnestly deprecated the cosmopolitan, "pray, now, why disturb the repose of those ancient Egyptians? What to us are their words or their thoughts? Are we pauper Arabs, without a house of our own, that, with the mummies, we must turn squatters among the dust of the Catacombs?"

Emerson in *Nature* begins a listing of references and allusions which includes the Brahmins, Pythagoras, Plato, Bacon, Leibnitz, Swedenborg, with "from the era of the Egyptians. . . ." Moreover, Emerson himself had in the first paragraph of *Nature* protested against this very same kind of groping "among the dry bones of the past." He said that our age "builds the sepulchres of the fathers" when we should "demand our own works and laws and worship." Yet he gleans his supporting examples and references from the mythology and history of the world. It is the natural manner of his thinking to bring together Sallust, Gibbon, Leonidas,

<sup>7</sup> Emerson uses the Greek word for "beauty" in *Nature*.

Arnold Winkelried, Columbus, Sir Harry Vane, Charles II, Lord Russell, Homer, Pindar, Socrates, Phocion, Jesus—all in one paragraph and all used to support one point. It is little wonder that Melville—himself a comber of the world for material to develop an idea, as in the chapter "The Whiteness of the Whale" in *Moby-Dick*—was prompted to the satirical comment: "Pray, now, why disturb the repose of those ancient Egyptians?"

Emerson had written of how light makes even a corpse beautiful. Melville's mystic says that "death, though in a worm, is majestic; while life, though in a king, is contemptible. So talk not against mummies. It is a part of my mission to teach mankind a due reverence for mummies." Lowell's characterization of Emerson in the *Fable for Critics* should be remembered:

So perfect a balance there is in his head,  
That he talks of things sometimes as if they  
were dead;  
Life, nature, love, God, and affairs of that sort,  
He looks at as merely ideas; in short,  
As if they were fossils stuck round in a cabinet,  
Of such vast extent that our earth's a mere dab  
in it; . . .

With the quiet precision of science he'll sort 'em,  
But you can't help suspecting the whole a *post mortem*.

Melville's mystic speaks in the same offhand way of consistency in which Emerson did in his essay "Self-reliance."<sup>8</sup> The mystic explains:

I seldom care to be consistent. In a philosophical view, consistency is a certain level at all times, maintained in all the thoughts of

<sup>8</sup> I see no evidence that Melville used Emerson's *Essays*, either first or second series, in his picture of Mark Winsome, except at this point on consistency. But this was a much-discussed by-product of Emerson's teaching, and it might well have been the subject of conversation in the Duyckinck circle in New York while Melville was on intimate terms with that literary coterie or with the Hawthornes in the Berkshires.



one's mind. But, since nature is nearly all hill and dale, how can one keep naturally advancing in knowledge without submitting to the natural inequalities in the progress?

Ending chapter ii in *Nature*, with the emphasis of position, is the unqualified dictum: "A man is fed, not that he may be fed, but that he may work." With like directness the mystic speaks: "Sir, . . . man came into this world, not to sit down and muse, not to befog himself with vain subtleties, but to gird up his loins and to work."

*Nature*, in the final two chapters, considers the nature of man.

Three problems are put by nature to the mind: What is matter? Whence is it? and Whereto?

Who can set bounds to the possibilities of man?

What is a day? What is a year? What is summer? What is woman? What is a child?

The cosmopolitan questions the mystic about a third man. "But tell me, what do you take him for? What is he?" "What are you?" the mystic of *The Confidence-Man*, taking his cue from Emerson, replies. "What am I? Nobody knows who anybody is."

Most of the parts of the mystic's conversation with the cosmopolitan in chapter xxxvi of *The Confidence-Man* have parallels or word associations in Emerson's *Nature*. But Melville, in presenting his satire of Emerson, did not stop there. To ground this mystic even more firmly on Emerson and to extend the criticism of transcendentalism, Melville introduces the mystic's disciple, Egbert, who is explicitly based on Henry David Thoreau.<sup>9</sup> Egbert is presented as "a promenader," "the first among mankind to reduce to practice the principles

<sup>9</sup> Melville, as I have pointed out in another article appearing in *College English*, Vol. VI (May, 1945), used Thoreau as a basis for "Bartleby."

of Mark Winsome—principles previously accounted as less adapted to life than the closet." In fact, he is introduced belittlingly with the words, "This . . . is Egbert, a disciple," as though he had no individual being.

Mark Winsome wishes Egbert to explain his mysticism to the cosmopolitan. He says:

You, Egbert, by simply setting forth your practice, can do more to enlighten one as to my theory, than I myself can by mere speech. Indeed, it is by you that I myself best understand myself. . . . Now, as in a glass, you, Egbert, in your life, reflect to me the more important part of my system. He, who approves you, approves the philosophy of Mark Winsome.<sup>10</sup> . . .

"Furthermore," glancing upon him paternal-ly, "Egbert is both my disciple and my poet. For poetry is not a thing of ink and rhyme, but of thought and act, and, in the latter way, is by anyone to be found anywhere, when in useful action sought."<sup>11</sup> In a word, my disciple here is a thriving young merchant, a practical poet in the West India trade. There," presenting Egbert's hand to the cosmopolitan, "I join you, and leave you." With which words, and without bowing, the master withdrew.

It might seem, at first glance, that this introduction of the disciple as engaged in

<sup>10</sup> Lowell does not name Thoreau by name in his *Fable for Critics*.

"There comes —, for instance; to see him's rare sport,

Tread in Emerson's tracks with legs painfully short; How he jumps, how he strains, and gets red in the face,

To keep step with the mystagogue's natural pace! He follows as close as a stick to a rocket, His fingers exploring the prophet's each pocket."

<sup>11</sup> Although Emerson worked out his theory of poetry much more fully in the essay, "The Poet," his ideas are presented in embryo form in *Nature* and are followed fairly accurately by Melville, though in his own language. Emerson wrote: ". . . the poet conforms things to his thoughts. . . . [He] esteems nature . . . as fluid, and impresses his being thereon . . . he invests dust and stones with humanity. . . . The remotest spaces of nature are visited, and the farthest sundered things are brought together, by a subtle spiritual connection . . . and all objects shrink and expand to serve the passion of the poet."



the West India trade, a practical young merchant, would be far from the real Thoreau; but Melville was a devotee of the pun, and his sense of humor often followed odd associations. Thoreau dealt heavily in Hindu, or Indian mysticism; hence he was engaged in the West India trade, introducing a product of India to the West.

Egbert is pictured as fifteen years the junior of Mark Winsome. Thoreau was fourteen years younger than Emerson. Melville's description of Egbert, if he had never seen Thoreau, would naturally be more general than his description of Emerson, whom he had seen. But he hit upon some points of Thoreau's appearance which were subject to discussion. "His [Egbert's] countenance of that neuter sort, which, in repose, is neither prepossessing nor disagreeable; so that it seemed quite uncertain how he would turn out." Hawthorne, with enthusiastic exaggeration, described Thoreau as

ugly as sin, long-nosed, queer mouthed, and with uncouth and somewhat rustic, though courteous manners, corresponding very well with such an exterior. But his ugliness is of an honest and agreeable fashion, and becomes him much better than beauty.<sup>12</sup>

Here the latter sentence seems to modify and soften the first blunt statement.

In 1855, the year before *The Confidence-Man* was written, the young Mr. F. B. Sanborn of Concord wrote a comment on Thoreau in his notebook:

He is a little under size, with a huge Emersonian nose, bluish gray eyes, brown hair, and a ruddy weather-beaten face, which reminds me of some shrewd and honest animal's—some retired philosophical woodchuck or magnanimous fox. He dresses very plainly, wears his collar turned over like Mr. Emerson [we young collegians then wearing ours upright], and often an

old dress-coat, broad in the skirts, and by no means a fit. He walks about with a brisk, rustic air, and never seems tired.<sup>13</sup>

Here in a few lines Sanborn naturally connects Thoreau to Emerson in two regards, as though the one were dependent on the other. Melville, too, connected Egbert's costume with his master's. "His dress was neat, with just enough of the mode to save it from the reproach of originality; in which general respect, though with a readjustment of details, his costume seemed modelled upon his master's."

Mark Winsome and Egbert, in appearance and relationship, resembled Emerson and Thoreau too closely and in too many details for the resemblance to be accidental. Mark Winsome's discourse is derived from certain aspects of Emerson's *Nature*. Even more conclusively and closely is Egbert's discourse on friendship an examination of the cold heartlessness of a section of *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers*, a book which Melville borrowed in 1850 from Evert Duyckinck. The connection between these two sections of *The Confidence-Man* and the *Week* is so close, however, that it can hardly be supposed to rest on a casual acquaintanceship six years removed.

In just the same way that Melville confronted the mystic with the particular example of the rattlesnake, he also asked Egbert, the disciple, to consider a particular instance of friendship:

The case is this: There are two friends, friends from childhood, bosom friends; one of whom, for the first time, being in need, for the first time seeks a loan from the other, who, so far as fortune goes, is more than competent to grant it.

<sup>12</sup> *The American Notebooks* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), p. 166. Hawthorne probably often talked with Melville concerning Thoreau.

<sup>13</sup> *Henry D. Thoreau* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1882), p. 199. The note in brackets was apparently added by Mr. Sanborn when preparing the biography.

The two men agree to act out the episode, the cosmopolitan to be the beseeching friend, calling himself Frank; the disciple of the transcendental philosopher, calling himself Charlie, to receive the request in a manner becoming to his principles. Frank, acting his part in a manly fashion, comes directly to the point. He is as open and direct as the name he assumes.

"Charlie, I am in want—urgent want of money."

"That's not well."

"But it *will* be well, Charlie, if you loan me a hundred dollars. I would not ask this of you, only my need is sore, and you and I have so long shared hearts and minds together, . . . that nothing remains to prove our friendship than . . . to share purses. You will do me the favour, won't you?"

"Favour? What do you mean by asking me to do you a favour? . . ."

"But won't you loan me the money?"

"No, Frank."

Thoreau devoted thirty pages of the *Week*, under "Wednesday," to his reflections and observations on friendship. No attempt is made here to do justice to Thoreau's ideas, but rather to show that Melville used Thoreau and this section of the *Week* as a basis for his caricature of transcendental friendship.

Thoreau affirmed that kindness was not necessarily a part of the relation of friendship, "and no such affront can be offered to a Friend as a conscious goodwill. . . ." This conception is elaborated in several different ways:

If one abates a little the price of his wood, or gives a neighbor his vote at town-meeting, or a barrel of apples, or lends him his wagon frequently, it is esteemed a rare instance of Friendship. . . . Most contemplate only what would be the accidental and trifling advantages of Friendship, as that the Friend can assist in time of need, by his substance, or his influence, or his counsel; but he who foresees such advantages in this relation proves himself blind to its real advantage, or indeed wholly in experi-

enced in the relation itself. Such services are particular and menial, compared with the perpetual and all-embracing service which it is. . . . *We do not wish for Friends to feed and clothe our bodies* [italics supplied],—neighbors are kind enough for that,—but to do the like office to our spirits. . . .

Nothing is so difficult as to help a Friend in matters which do not require the aid of Friendship, but only a cheap and trivial service. . . .

Friendship is, at any rate, a relation of perfect equality. It cannot well spare any outward sign of equal obligation and advantage.

In the light of Thoreau's presentation in the *Week*, Charlie is not doing violence to true friendship in refusing the loan, a refusal which he justifies thus:

I give away money, but never loan it; and of course the man who calls himself my friend is above receiving alms. . . . To be sure there are, and I have, what is called business friends; that is, commercial acquaintances, very convenient persons. But I draw a red-ink line between them and my friends in the true sense—my friends social and intellectual. In brief, a true friend has nothing to do with loans; he should have a soul above loans.

Charlie continued his discourse, enthusiastic in his practical application of transcendental principle:

Loans are such unfriendly accommodations as are to be had from the soulless corporation of a bank. . . . Well, now, where is the friendliness of my letting a starving man have, say, the money's worth of a barrel of flour upon the condition that, on a given day, he shall let me have the money's worth of a barrel and a half of flour. . . .

Moreover, Charlie argues, if the money is not paid on that agreed-upon day, then comes the cruel proviso of foreclosure, a contingency which must be at least contemplated as possible from the very first. Can the loan be a friend's act and the foreclosure an enemy's act? "Don't you see? The enmity lies couched in the friendship, just as the ruin in the relief."

All right, Frank urges, still in need of money, loan me without interest.

That would be alms.

Well, as Frank's need is great, I'll accept the alms. Between friends there is no humiliation.

Here Charlie cites

my sublime master, who, in his *Essay on Friendship*, says so nobly, that if he want a terrestrial convenience, not to his friend celestial (or friend social and intellectual) would he go; no: for his terrestrial convenience, to his friend terrestrial (or humbler business friend) he goes.

Emerson's essay, "Friendship," from the *Essays, First Series*, while not using these words, does make such a distinction:

My friends have come to me unsought. The great God gave them to me. . . .

I hate the prostitution of the name of friendship to signify modish and worldly alliances. . . .

Why should we desecrate noble and beautiful souls by intruding on them? Why insist on rash personal relations with your friends? . . . Let him be to me a spirit. A message, a thought, a sincerity, a glance from him, I want, but not news, nor pottage. I can get politics and chat and neighborly conveniences from cheaper companions.

Frank, anxious for the loan, agrees to be a friend humbler than the celestial.

Very good. Business is business. A loan. Three per cent a month? Security? An indorser?

Surely you do not mean—

"You forget we are now business friends."

"Since then, Charlie, neither as the one nor the other sort of friend you have defined, can I prevail with you; how if, combining the two, I sue as both?"

"Are you a centaur?"

Frank, putting aside intellectual argument, makes a warmhearted appeal. "Ah, what is friendship, if it be not the helping hand and the feeling heart, the good Samaritan pouring out at need the purse as the vial!"

Frank continues his plea:

Oh, Charlie! you talk not to a god, a being who in himself holds his own estate, but to a man who, being a man, is the sport of fate's wind and wave, and who mounts toward heaven or sinks toward hell, as the billows roll him in trough or on crest.

And Charlie replies: "Man has a soul; which, if he will, puts him beyond fortune's finger and the future's spite. Don't whine like fortune's whipped dog, Frank. . . ."

Melville's warmhearted, friendly, and generous nature rebelled at this cold aloofness which he saw in the two Concord writers. It had to him a quality of inhumanity.

"Help, help, Charlie, I want help!"

"Help? to say nothing of the friend, there is something wrong about the man who wants help. There is somewhere a defect, a want, in brief, a need, a crying need, somewhere about that man."

"So there is Charlie.—Help, help!"

"How foolish a cry, when to implore help, is itself the proof of undesert of it."

"Oh, this, all along, is not you, Charlie, but some ventriloquist who usurps your larynx. It is Mark Winsome that speaks, not Charlie."

"If so, thank heaven, the voice of Mark Winsome is not alien but congenial to my larynx. If the philosophy of that illustrious teacher find little response among mankind at large, it is less that they do not possess teachable tempers, than because they are so unfortunate as not to have natures predisposed to accord with him."

"Welcome, that compliment to humanity," exclaimed Frank with energy, "the truer because unintended. And long in this respect may humanity remain what you affirm it. And long it will; since humanity, inwardly feeling how subject it is to straits, and hence how precious is help, will, for selfishness' sake, if no other, long postpone ratifying a philosophy that banishes help from the world."

Melville thus puts a plea for human sympathy against abstract coldness. He wants his argument and his thinking reduced to the level of particulars. Would you, under these circumstances, turn this man away empty? It is by use of such

individual instances that he reduces transcendentalism to a paradox. Involved in the incident is an ironical commentary on the "practicalness" of the disciple of Mark Winsome, for he, under all circumstances, finds it unnecessary to aid others.

Thoreau's wording was such as to arouse Melville's scorn. In the *Week* Thoreau wrote:

Friendship is not so kind as is imagined; it has not much human blood in it, but consists with a certain disregard for men and their erections, the Christian duties and humanities, while it purifies the air like electricity. . . . It is not the highest sympathy merely, but a pure and lofty society, . . . which . . . does not hesitate to disregard the humbler rights and duties of humanity. . . . When he . . . treats his Friend like a Christian, or as he can afford, — then Friendship ceases to be Friendship, and becomes charity. . . .

Melville's scorn is cutting. Such cold-bloodedness has from him no consideration. Frank, as a human being, asks for aid. Charlie tells him to come as a stranger, begging alms, and he shall receive a few pennies. "But no man drops pennies into the hat of a friend, let me tell you. If you turn beggar, then, for the honour of noble friendship, I turn stranger."

"Enough," cried the other, rising, and with a toss of his shoulders seeming disdainfully to throw off the character he had assumed. "Enough. I have had my fill of the philosophy of Mark Winsome as put into action. And moonshiny as it in theory may be, yet a very practical philosophy it turns out in effect, as he himself engaged I should find. . . . Apt disciple! Why wrinkle the brow, and waste the oil both of life and the lamp, only to turn out a head kept cool by the under ice of the heart? . . . Pray, leave me, and with you take the last dregs

of your inhuman philosophy. And here, take this shilling, and at the first wood-landing buy yourself a few chips to warm the frozen natures of you and your philosopher by."

The hypothetical conversation is thus abruptly ended; and thus abruptly Melville takes his leave of Mark Winsome and his promenader disciple, Egbert. The satirical treatment of these two transcendentalists, both friends of Melville's friends, both of whom he was familiar with through their works, comprises one-seventh of *The Confidence-Man* in substance and a much greater part than that in reading interest. These chapters of discussion by Melville underscore the warmth and humor of his nature and indicate the manly, practical directness of his thinking. He was interested in viewing his contemporaries and challenging some of their conclusions. His caricatures of Emerson and Thoreau are done with pointed directness, though almost entirely without bitterness. He sees some of the absurdities into which their abstractions lead them. He answers abstraction with concrete example, a practice which characterizes his work throughout. The coldness of logic he met with the warmth of human sympathy. On that point he was clear and emphatic. Emerson and Thoreau both offered qualities which he could admire, but his judgment of them is critical. His attack is aimed directly at the center of their thinking, of their abstract approaches to life's problems. Melville probably did not know that Thoreau gave up his own coat to clothe Johnny Riordan. He would have applauded such an act. He objected to omitting such human directness from the transcendental essays.



## *The New Curriculums of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton<sup>1</sup>*

J. MILTON FRENCH<sup>2</sup>

IT MAY not be wholly news to this assembly that changes have been taking place in college curriculums. To be sure, changes have been taking place in the curriculum at least since the days of Aristotle. Three hundred years and more ago a man whom we all highly honor but whom some unenlightened readers have occasionally thought of as a stodgy and conventional thinker gave it as his opinion that the whole educational process was wrong and wasteful. He deplored the "many mistakes which have made learning generally so unpleasing and so unsuccessful. . . . We do amiss," he said, "to spend seven or eight years merely in scraping together so much miserable Latin and Greek [today he would have said English] as might be learned otherwise easily and delightfully in one year." We act preposterously, he charged, in "forcing the empty wits of children to compose themes, verses, and orations, which are the acts of ripest judgment, and the final work of a head filled by long reading and observing, with elegant maxims and copious invention. These are not matters to be wrung from poor striplings, like blood out of the nose, or the plucking of untimely fruits." Students at that time began with the wrong courses, where "they stuck unreasonably to learn a few words with

lamentable construction," only to find themselves in their sophomore or junior years "tossed and turmoiled with their unballasted wits in fathomless and unquiet deeps of controversy." No wonder they "grow into hatred and contempt of learning, mocked and deluded all this while with ragged notions and babblements, while they expected worthy and delightful knowledge." The writer proposed, instead of these mistakes, to give his pupil a "complete and generous education, that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." If the result of this pleasant revolution was not to produce a nursery of little geniuses, the fault was not wholly with John Milton himself. It is not yet certain that the new plan of general education at Harvard will produce only Conants and Bucks.

But let me not spend too much time in entering upon my assigned topic for today. Your president<sup>3</sup> has kindly invited me to evaluate the new Harvard, Yale, and Princeton curriculums so far as they relate to the teaching of English. As I have thought over this assignment and studied the programs issued by these universities, I have found it difficult to discuss the work in English specifically without considering the programs as a whole. If, therefore, I spend somewhat more time than she expects on

<sup>1</sup> Read before the New York Council of College Teachers of English, April 27, 1946.

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<sup>3</sup> Professor Mary A. Wyman, Hunter College.



the general curriculum, I hope she will forgive me and perhaps find in this material a few things which will help illuminate the work in English. I shall give first, then, a brief digest of the proposed changes in each university, then a comparison of the three on certain points, and finally a few summarizing remarks.

#### I. HARVARD

Briefly, the Harvard plan divides the area of human knowledge into three categories: (1) the physical world (science and mathematics), (2) man's corporate life (social studies), and (3) man's inner visions and standards (the humanities). General education (or a broad education, a liberal education, a well-rounded education), which has previously called for a minimum of four courses in the student's four years to be divided among these areas, with at least one in each, now calls for six, to be divided with at least one, and preferably two, in each. Two new courses have been prepared, both of which will be compulsory for all students, one in literature and one in a field which might be called either history or philosophy but which seems to be a combination of both. These are (1) *Great Texts of Literature*, in which not more than eight books selected from Homer, Greek tragedies, Plato, the Bible, Virgil, Dante, Shakespeare, and Tolstoy will be read by students who are said to be "in fact passionately if inarticulately hungry for greatness in the common cares of man"; and (2) *Western Thought and Institutions*, in which the students will read works by some, but not all, of the following writers and thinkers: Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Luther, Bodin, Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Adam Smith, Bentham, and Mill. New introductory courses in other fields, specifically in

science, are recommended for students not majoring in these subjects.

The rules for concentration in English, for majors in the field, have not greatly changed from previous years. They call for six courses in the field of modern languages in general, of which at least four must be in English. All majors must pass, before graduation, three examinations on outside reading: one on ten books of the Bible, one on twelve plays of Shakespeare, and one on two writers selected from the following list: Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Virgil, and Horace. Although there is no rule about when this reading is to be accomplished, it is assumed that it will very largely be accomplished during vacation time.

There is, however, to be a considerable change in the famous English A, for many years the only compulsory course in the catalogue. It is in the future to be broken into two parts. The first term is to be not radically different from its present status as a course in composition. The second term, however, will be discontinued or, rather, metamorphosed. Instead of taking formal course work in English, all students will write frequent themes in their other courses, and the themes will be read by instructors in composition, with individual conferences. The hope is that the students will enjoy their writing more and will have more to say in it if it grows out of their reading in so-called "subject-matter" courses.

The conspicuous changes, as I see them, are: (1) the construction and introduction of the two new required courses in literature and in social studies, (2) the plan to construct broad introductory courses in all subjects, (3) the increase in the requirement in distribution of courses for general education from four

courses to six, or from 25 per cent to 37½ per cent, and (4) the alteration of English A.

The reception of the report has been widely cordial. The size and distinguished membership of the committee appointed to draw up the plan, the slow and careful manner in which they worked, the imposing physical appearance of their published report, not to mention the fact that they virtually legalized and sanctioned practices which had been thought about and even put into operation in certain other colleges, took the country almost by storm. There were scattered demurrers, to be sure. President Hutchins of Chicago slyly pointed out that Chicago has been doing the same thing for years and that Harvard had only just found out about it. President Klapper of Queens doubted whether merely changing the names of the sides in the age-old debate from "liberal *vs.* vocational" education to "general *vs.* special" education constituted a real answer to the baffling problem and also regretted that more detailed plans for the always difficult survey courses had not been presented. Those of us who drew up a new curriculum at Rutgers, which appeared shortly before the Harvard report, thought that we had done slightly better than Harvard in one respect by having our students divide their six general education courses equally among the three areas (two in humanities, two in social studies, and two in sciences and no two in the same department and none in the department of the major). Other educators reacted in other ways, some enthusiastic, some cool, some more or less scornful. But the great majority felt that a wise step forward had been taken and that the colleges which had been wondering what they ought to do had now found out.

## II. YALE

The Yale plan is more ambitious, more complex. There are, in fact, three Yale plans, or three parts of the new program. One is the Standard Program, designed for the great majority of future students; a second, called the Scholars of the House Program, is designed for a small group of unusually promising students; and the third, the Experimental Program (or Program of Directed Studies), is a guinea pig for future curriculums. The Standard Program bears many resemblances to the Harvard plan; the Scholars of the House Program goes to the extreme of liberality and allows the student almost entire freedom from formal requirements after the sophomore year; and the Experimental Program goes to the other extreme by prescribing every course for the first two years and then, after allowing the student a choice of four or five fields, prescribing almost every course taken within those fields. The student is to be allowed to change from one of these three programs to another at the end of the sophomore year if he is fitted to do so and wishes to.

To save time, I shall omit further discussion of the Scholars of the House and the Experimental programs. The Standard Program is described as a middle ground between "reactionary curricula" and the "chaos of the free elective system." It makes nine requirements, though most of them are requirements in departments rather than in specific courses. Every student must take work in English, modern language, systematic thinking (mathematics, logic, or linguistics), science (two years, physical and biological), social sciences, classics (in the original or translation), the fine arts, and philosophy or history. Some of these requirements may be antici-

pated by outstanding work in school, but most students will probably take all but one or two of them.

The last two years are divided between the work in the major and the electives. Two courses each year are in the major subject, and two are open to free choice, provided the requirements of the first two years have been fully satisfied. In addition, the student spends part of his time preparing an essay or getting ready for his departmental examination. Finally, each student is assigned a certain amount of outside reading to be done during the summers of his first three years, with a report to be submitted in the fall.

The English major is considerably changed. Students hereafter will not study periods of literature so exclusively as before but will choose required courses on a different plan. Two semester-courses will deal with individual authors (Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser, or Milton); two will deal with historical periods; two will be in "vertical" courses (epic, lyric, satire, novel, essay, etc.); and two will be in language and criticism. A final departmental examination, given in addition to those in individual courses, will occupy two four-hour periods on two different days. The first will be a single essay, or at most two essays, on topics which call for a good deal of co-ordination among courses previously taken; the second will be devoted to criticism of passages of verse or prose.

Elementary courses will be considerably changed. Freshman English will be divided into three stages or states according to the ability of the student, and a correspondingly greater or lesser proportion will be devoted to composition. In any case, some of the great figures in English literature will be read by all students. The sophomore survey course

will be of two kinds, depending on whether the student is to major in English or not. The majors will study the King James Bible, Dante, Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, Swift, Pope, Wordsworth, and T. S. Eliot; the nonmajors will study the Bible, Shakespeare, Milton, Swift, the *Odyssey*, Sophocles, *Crime and Punishment*, and modern poetry.

In summary, although Dean De Vane likes to observe that his committee had no money to work with whereas the Harvard group had \$60,000, Yale has prepared a far more radical plan. The chief features in it seem to be: (1) the three plans, for standard, bright, and guinea-pig students; (2) the nine required subjects; (3) the possibility of anticipation of several of these requirements; (4) summer reading; (5) the new departmental examinations; (6) the division of the survey course into what is virtually two distinct courses.

Since this plan has not reached print, the response to it has not been so wide as that to the Harvard proposal. But Yale has high hopes for it, intimating that it may equip the student to "live magnanimously and intellectually in the modern world." Dean De Vane writes me that he hopes that this program will "insure a very strong education of a broad nature to all our students, and provide at the same time a community of studies and a common experience for our young men." In a talk at the University of Pennsylvania on March 29 he described this Yale plan with enthusiasm and speculated whether this, as well as the other plans of a similar nature which are sweeping the country, is not to a considerable extent the result of the twinges of conscience of those of us who were in college in the last war, who were the irresponsibles later, and who were resolved that our students should not make any of

the mistakes that we made. He wondered whether some schemes (perhaps even including Yale's) had gone too far and whether there might have to be some retreats—some not too graceful—within the coming years. He expressed his chief fear of the new arrangement as financial, since it will cost money to work out all the co-operation and the superior teaching that will be needed to make it a success.

### III. PRINCETON

The distinguishing feature of the Princeton system is its pyramid-like construction. At the base are certain distribution requirements not radically different from those at Harvard and Yale; on the next level above are divisional requirements; and on the top are departmental requirements. The purpose seems to be to lay a broad flooring of education, on which the student will build a steadily rising structure.

Distribution requirements provide that by the end of the summer of the sophomore year, if not earlier, the student shall have taken one year's work in (1) natural science, (2) social science, exclusive of history, (3) arts and letters, and (4) history, philosophy, or religion. The courses to be taken are said to be not survey courses but subject-matter courses in particular fields. In addition, he must have reached proficiency in (1) a foreign language (reading knowledge) and (2) mathematics (through at least a part of calculus). This proficiency is to be tested either by a qualifying test or by the College Entrance Examination Board examinations. During the freshman and sophomore years the student takes five courses, as a junior four, and as a senior three.

The fourfold division of knowledge, as distinguished from the more common

threefold, is based on the argument that "history, philosophy, and religion, as taught at Princeton, give the student a sense of the unity of knowledge, a feeling for the organic relationships between different disciplines (particularly between the social sciences and the humanities) which cannot be gained from courses in the other three areas alone." This idea of a correlating function appears also in the Yale plan, especially in the Directed Program, in which, in the freshman and sophomore years, one of the five courses is an integrating course the function of which is to make clear to the student the relationship between his other courses.

The second step, the divisional requirement, is intended "to give sophomore year new meaning and direction" and "to provide a broader and firmer base for departmental concentration." This area provides about half the course elections made during the sophomore and junior years. It ends with a divisional examination at the end of the junior year. It provides "a transition from the exploratory work of the underclass years to the departmental concentration of upperclass years." The three divisions are natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. The field of American Civilization is a nondivisional or interdivisional subject. An English major's division would, of course, be the humanities.

The third and last step concerns the departmental requirements. These comprise more than half the work of the junior and senior years. The department, which is chosen at the end of the sophomore year, is usually within the division previously elected, but changes are possible.

It is interesting to note the statement made in the announcement that



"at no point in this program of study is any one particular course required. Princeton University . . . believes enough in the growing maturity of its students to preserve the freedom of choice which is essential to the development in all undergraduates of a sense of responsibility about their own education. . . . The recent tendency toward prescribed courses and prescribed study of specified books and experiments is false to the diversity of student interests and character." It may be noted in explanation of this statement that it may not be directed solely against Harvard and Yale but that it may with fully as high a degree of probability refer to St. John's and other institutions.

The philosophy of this arrangement is stated as follows in the announcement:

The four stages thus form a coherent program of study which carries the student from the relatively limited curriculum of secondary school to the specialized work of a later career. After qualification to do college work, the student is stimulated to widen his intellectual horizons, to explore new subjects and look afresh at old, to search out the regions of learning where his dominant interests may lie. Guided at first by the distribution requirements of freshman and sophomore years, this process continues on in some measure to the end of senior year through the choice of electives. But before the thrill of discovering new fields of knowledge becomes aimless and ever wider sampling, the student is asked to give his studies a broad focus in the divisional work of sophomore and junior years. Having learned to search for significant relationships between the various courses of his divisional program, he is better prepared to establish a still sharper focus for his work in the departmental concentration of junior and senior years. In this final stage his purpose is to bring what critical and creative faculties he has developed to bear upon a single academic subject and thus incidentally to prepare himself for the transition after graduation to the still more specialized experience of a career or of post-graduate work.

The specific curriculum in English is divided into three parts, since a student may major in (1) English Language and Literature, (2) English Literature and Its European Backgrounds, or (3) English Literature and American Civilization. The first option, which sounds like the conventional one, calls for two courses each term through the junior and senior years. The second calls for three courses, of which one shall be in English; one in the classics, the Renaissance, or a modern foreign language; and the third in either category. The third option requires two or three courses to be divided among English and American literature, history, philosophy, and politics, with the majority from English literature. There is also to be a thesis in American literature.

In addition to these courses, the major is expected to do a considerable amount of independent reading to be selected in conference with a departmental adviser and to write a number of long reports on it. He also takes two general departmental examinations: one at the end of the junior year on English history and literature plus the field of his selection as explained above, and the other at the end of the senior year on English literature and his independent reading.

One word about freshman English may be added. "It is expected that all candidates shall have attained the ability to use clear and correct English before entrance." Those who have not are assigned to special corrective work in composition.

The important features of this plan are (1) the pyramid structure of distribution-division-department courses; (2) the avoidance of prescribed courses; (3) the idea of correlation through history or philosophy; (4) the divisional and departmental examinations; (5) the non-

requirement of freshman English; (6) the designation of American Civilization as an interdivisional field of work; (7) the wider forms of the English major; and (8) the heavy emphasis on independent reading and on general examinations.

Professor Thorp, who had much to do with planning the new curriculum, voices one fear and one note of confidence. The fear is that the faculty will have to put in a great amount of work to make the new divisional program effective—planning programs of study, making departments work together, and designing divisional examinations. The confidence is that the freshman courses in sciences and other subjects will be easier to manage and more effective than the large required courses set up in other institutions.

#### IV. ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON

It may help if we now review some of this material by arranging it under topics rather than by colleges. We may ask some questions and note the answers which the three institutions are giving.

1. What is the philosophy of the new rules of distribution? Harvard: "We need a common bond of training, common memories instead of atomization of the curriculum." Yale: "The purpose is to equip the student to live magnanimously and intellectually in the modern world." Princeton: No such philosophy is stated, but emphasis is laid upon the educational pyramid, with the premise that "there are no indispensable years."

2. What are the studies which an educated man needs to know? Harvard: the physical world, man's corporate life, and his inner visions and standards—six courses in the humanities, the social sciences, and the sciences. Yale: English, a modern language, systematic thinking, science, social sciences, the classics, literature or music or art, philosophy,

history. Princeton: natural science, social science, arts and letters, history or philosophy or religion, mathematics or a foreign language. All these requirements are aside from those in the major field, and, at Princeton, from the divisional demands.

3. What specific courses are required? Harvard: freshman English, Great Texts of Literature, and Western Thought and Institutions. Yale: freshman English. Princeton: none.

4. How have survey courses been changed? Harvard: Two new ones in literature and in history-philosophy have been introduced and made compulsory for all; others, especially in physical science and biological science, are in preparation. Yale: Two similar scientific survey courses are included. Princeton: Survey courses are specifically outlawed.

5. What provision is made for special students? Harvard: Tutorial work, in which the student has a course individually tailored for him and in which he works alone with a tutor, will be restricted chiefly to honors students. This is what the report calls the Jeffersonian approach to education rather than the Jacksonian, which is the standard course for the ordinary student. Yale: The Scholars of the House Program, designed for a few exceptionally able men, frees them largely from course requirements after the sophomore year. The culmination of their studies is an essay, which is expected to be "mature and distinguished," the idea of which is frankly modeled on the honors essays at Harvard, the best of which have been published from time to time. The Experimental Program (Directed Program), though not specifically made for the brilliant student, is at least to be tried on specially chosen men. Princeton: None mentioned.

6. What debts to other colleges are found here? Harvard: The Columbia course in Contemporary Civilization is frankly admitted to have played a large part in the making of the Western Thoughts and Institutions course; many other institutions are acknowledged to have contributed more or less, though they are not named. Yale: President Hutchins, President Barr, and such progressive colleges as Bard, Connecticut, Sarah Lawrence, and Bennington have influenced the shaping of the program. Princeton: No comment.

7. What will the new curriculums cost? Harvard: It cost \$60,000 to finance the work of the committee; other expenses are not discussed. Yale: The cost will be considerable, since the faculty will have to be 12 per cent larger than under the curriculum of 1940-41. Princeton: No cost mentioned.

8. What arrangements are made for interdepartmental work? Harvard: Numerous combination majors are possible, like history-literature: the new science courses are at least co-operative between two or more departments. Yale: In the Experimental Program one course taken through the first two years is an "integration"; it will be the function of the teacher of this course to combine the other courses being taken by the student into one unified philosophy and to show how truth may be reached by different kinds of reasoning and study. Princeton: The work of much of the sophomore and junior years is within a division rather than a department, and an examination at the end of the junior year is based on this divisional work. Much is being made also of American Civilization as a field for majoring, in which work in history, literature, and other disciplines unite.

9. How is freshman English taught?

Harvard: One term is devoted to specific training in composition; in the second the student's papers for his other courses are read by members of the English department to guard against inadequate writing. Yale: For the poorer students part of the year is devoted to composition, but the latter part of their course, like the whole of that for better students, is given to study of a few key figures in English literature, culminating in two plays of Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *King Lear*. Princeton: Students who cannot write clear and correct English take a course in composition.

10. What courses are required for a major in English? Harvard: English A, the survey of English literature, and four advanced courses in the junior and senior years and two further courses in modern languages. Honors men also take tutorial work and write an extended essay. Yale: English A, the survey course (which is a course in the great figures rather than in a large number of more ordinary writers), and five courses in the junior and senior years (one in a foreign literature), arranged according to the plan outlined in the foregoing. Princeton: four or five courses in the last two years, following introductory work in the first two years, and some independent work.

#### V. COMMENT

It may be of interest to this group to bring in one little item from my own college. Shortly before any of these reports were published, but of course under the influence of them and similar ideas incubating elsewhere, Rutgers University made its own plan for a broader and safer curriculum than it had previously had. After a good deal of work by our Committee on Educational Policies, we arrived at the following recommenda-

tion, which has been accepted in principle by the whole university but specifically put into operation only by the College of Arts and Sciences. Every student will hereafter be required to take two year-courses in each of the general fields of (1) the humanities, (2) the social studies, and (3) mathematics and science; two years' work in a modern foreign language; freshman English; the work required by the major; and enough electives to total twenty courses. The two courses in each field must each be in different departments, and none must be in the field of the major. The specific additional requirements for a major in English are a survey course in English literature, a course in British history, a survey course in a foreign literature, and four advanced courses in English literature chosen to cover representative periods or writers. Though far simpler than any of the three other plans discussed here, ours is, we think, not conspicuously inferior.

How radical a change do these new plans represent in the work of the student? Just for fun I have been looking back over my own college course to see how bad it was. I have never felt entirely satisfied with it because it seemed to me that I missed some of the great courses which I should surely have taken if I had had any sense at all. But, with the exception of the Western Thought and Institutions course, I should have fulfilled pretty closely the demands of Harvard today. With some juggling in my major courses I should more than satisfy Rutgers and Yale, and I believe that I should have had enough divisional work to win the approval of Princeton. It is a sobering thought to find that we have put in so much work and spent so much money only to bring our students up to the level

of work of 1917. Of course, I exaggerate slightly, but we must not be too much overwhelmed by the elaborateness of these reports, even those bound in massive covers.

For, after all, the one most important factor underlying all these designs is the quality of the teacher. Much is said in all these reports about the almost desperate necessity of finding good teachers if the new systems are to work. Indeed, one almost wonders at times, in reading them, whether the writers are not hoping almost for the impossible in this regard. With good teachers even the old program will work pretty well. If proof were needed, we have only to look at ourselves, the distinguished product of such a system. To put it differently, if the success of a new curriculum depends vitally on the special ability of just the right teacher, what is to happen to it when it has to be handed over, as all courses sometimes must, to ordinary teachers? The caliber of the teacher is still more important than the blueprint of the course. As Dr. Ordway Tead has recently put it, "The curriculum cannot be better than the teacher."

I agree heartily with some of the statements of Norman Foerster in his recent book, *The Humanities and the Common Man*. Says Professor Foerster: "Curricular legerdemain is no substitute for a change of heart and mind in the professoriate. What we are suffering from today is not so much a trivialized curriculum as a trivialized faculty. . . . No educational institution is any better than the sum of the men who do its work." When Mr. Foerster goes on, however, to describe the work in English and comparative literature at Harvard before 1917 as "an egregiously bad procedure," redeemed only by the brilliance of men like Kittredge, Babbitt, Neilson, Perry, Bak-



er, Briggs, and Rand, it seems to me he goes too far. The program, of course, had weaknesses, but it was not "egregiously bad." And, when he asserts that all college professors are pedants, dilettantes, or career-builders and that the latter class is composed in turn of Machiavellians and passive yes men, I protest. If such were the case, there would be no hope for us; we should simply close up shop and go back, like John Keats, to our pillboxes. But the saving grace is that, if such were the case, the critics would then probably also belong in this category, and so the criticisms need not terrify us so much as they otherwise might.

The situation is somewhat like the proposals of a committee of the College English Association as presented in the current issue of the Association's *News Letter*. The most revolutionary item in that report is the recommendation that the conventional freshman course in composition be abandoned. It would seem, at first blush, that this would mean the virtual collapse of our profession, since that course provides the bread and butter for three-quarters of us. But closer reading reveals that, although this course is to disappear, it is to be replaced by a course which demands the same amount of writing "about something which the student has been made to feel important because of its context in a substantial course." In other words, the writing remains virtually unchanged, but it is to be about some subject in which the boys (and girls) feel interested rather than bored stiff as they now are. Those of us who for lo! these many years have been trying so hard to find topics which would put the kids to sleep and

make them loathe us may possibly resent this revelation, but I should be greatly surprised if any of this company found themselves in this group.

More seriously, all attempts to intensify the unity and coherence of the college program are commendable and deserve our support. All these revisions of the curriculum strive in various ways to insure the student against his own bad judgment in selecting courses which will leave blind spots in his education. Second, they attempt to lay down as inviting a path as possible before the student, one in which the jolt between step and step shall be minimized. And, third, they endeavor to reveal to him the essential unity of truth under its different guises of literature, science, history, mathematics, and other subjects. Perhaps the Harvard plan emphasizes the first goal more than the others, the Princeton plan the second, and the Yale plan the third. It is too early at this time to judge the relative efficacy of the three roads to Heaven, unless we happen to have looked upon the face of Truth as undergraduates in Cambridge, New Haven, or Princeton, in which case we know the answers but find it as hopeless to try to communicate them as did the divine Cassandra. In any case, we can probably agree that, for the great mass of outsiders unable to enter our own sacred portals, the offerings of the sister-institutions look pretty good. If a little tinkering with the curriculum and a little persuasive salesmanship in the catalogues will make any considerable number of students take their college work more enthusiastically to heart and feel that "bliss was it in that dawn to be alive," our \$60,000 is a cheap price to pay.

## *The Basic Communications Course*

LEVETTE J. DAVIDSON<sup>1</sup> AND FREDERICK SORENSEN<sup>2</sup>

THE basic communications course at the University of Denver has been developed over a period of six or seven years. It is a weaving-together of several strands: functional units from our traditional freshman English, new approaches to the problems of communication—from our department of speech—and a modern concept of student needs derived from participation in the Twenty-College Study in General Education. With the impetus of this study, an experimental course called "English Expression" was developed co-operatively by representatives from English, speech, philosophy, and library science.

The new course gave fifteen hours of credit and lasted the full year. Gradually this experimental course became so popular that in 1944 the faculty decided to make it the required course for freshmen. Last year, 1945-46, it was launched with some fourteen hundred students, twenty-five teachers, and twenty clinicians. For the coming year, 1946-47, there will be over twenty-five hundred students, fifty teachers, and about fifty clinicians. Co-operation between the two departments, English and speech, is made possible by means of a co-ordinator, Dr. Wilson Paul, who synchronizes the entire program.

We at the University of Denver wish to pass on to others, as a contribution to

the literature of general education, what we have learned in building such a program.<sup>3</sup> That is the purpose of this article.

The basic communications course at the University of Denver, like other communications skills courses, is concerned with the integration of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Great emphasis is placed upon listening because that is what people do most frequently, unless they are oververbalized. Listening with adequate discrimination is a difficult art. One must grasp meaning quickly, must evaluate the ethos of the speaker, and must add or deduct something for that factor, depending on whether the speaker is saying anything of significance or not. Students in these perilous times must be taught how to avoid being duped by persuasive speakers.

The most distinctive feature of the University of Denver basic communications course is the breadth of its objective. Necessary as the four skills just mentioned are, they are only a means to an end. They are the tools. The major objective of this course is to secure the best possible adjustment of the individual in the complex field of human relations, and the principal method used to help the student attain such adjustment is general semantics. Clarity in writing, for example, depends on clarity in

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<sup>3</sup> See also Wilson Paul, Frederick Sorensen, and Elwood Murray, "A Functional Core for the Basic Communications Course," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, XXXII (April, 1946), 232-44.

thought. Hence we train students to live and think by means of the best modern methods.

A second difference from other communications courses is the use of graduate-student clinicians to help in the individualization of instruction. The type of training attempted in this course would be much more difficult without these assistants. The freshmen at the University of Denver are not taught *en masse*, even though there are over two thousand of them in the program. Each is given thorough pretesting so that we shall have a rough estimate of his needs, and a profile of the test results is placed in individual files located in the writing clinic.

Very few students are granted exemption from the course, no matter how high their scores are on the entrance tests. Oververbalized, intensionally oriented students are often the ones who make high grades on the tests, and we certainly do not consider these people to be adequately adjusted in the field of human relations. Students who have received A grades in high school speech work are often egocentric extroverts who need a great deal of additional training to undo the bad social habits which have been trained into them through competitive speech. Students who have received A grades in high school English are often egocentric introverts. They may need more help than less "superior" students.

Four clinics serve the basic communications program: a reading clinic under the direction of Dr. Wilhelmina Hill, a writing clinic under the direction of Dr. Frederick Sorensen, a speaking clinic under the direction of Dr. Robert Harrington, and a guidance clinic under the direction of Dr. Dan Feder. The university has the services of a full-time psy-

chiatrist, Dr. Lewis Barbato. Students whose problems go beyond the depth of the clinics are sent to the psychiatrist. Work in the writing clinic is built upon the foundation of Rogerian nondirective counseling. It is felt that the student who considers himself a non-writer is blocked by fears similar to stage fright in the speaking situation. It is the task of the various clinics to find (if possible) the causes of the student's particular blockages and to help him to overcome them.

In this process the clinicians are of prime importance. The clinician is a graduate student in English or speech, working toward the Master's degree. The clinician has several duties. First, he is to give some tutorial aid to all students to help them succeed rather than fail in their writing and speech assignments. Repeated failure is good for no one. Such failure in previous school or social situations is the usual cause of the fear which is a blockage to accomplishment, especially in the speech situation.

The student classifies himself as "poor" in spelling, writing, reading, speaking, and then he has to live up (or down) to his self-imposed, or otherwise imposed, standard. That a person will continue to do this when it is detrimental to his progress seems hard to believe, but it is a demonstrated fact of human behavior.

The second duty of the clinician is to collect and assemble as much biographical data as possible concerning the student, to find his needs and his hopes and fears. The clinician can do this better than most teachers because, since he is also a student, he is on the same side of the fence as the student and because he does not give grades.

The third duty of the clinician is to give extra help to the people who need it

most. It is not our belief that the duty of the university is to educate the élite only. Many of the so-called "poor" students in English and speech are excellent in chemistry or engineering. It is our contention that they are poor in English largely through accident of environment or education. Our aim is to set them on their feet again, to give them the courage and the technical know-how to succeed, and then to start an educational race between them and the "superior" students. That should be salutary for all concerned, especially for our democratic society as a whole.

At the University of Denver we teach co-operative thinking rather than competitive thinking. We are attempting to help build such habits of mind as will make a world state possible. That is the only way that we can see to avert the onset of another war and the consequent destruction of modern civilization as we know it.

In the basic communications classes the students write no themes as "themes." They write papers of a particular length for a given purpose and audience. That papers be of a specified length is important, for such is the restriction usually placed upon a writer. Likewise, no speeches are given as "speeches." Speaking with a definite time limitation is done for a specific purpose and audience. Proper timing is most essential in effective speaking. And, rather than formal speeches or debates, we stress panels and co-operative discussion.

The year's work is divided as follows: the first quarter is devoted largely to observing and reporting (preceding good communication must come good observing—fact first, then words); the second quarter is devoted to collecting, organizing, and presenting "fact" in the re-

search paper; the third quarter is devoted to a study of methods of securing interest and emphasis. In the first quarter the student studies himself in his more limited environment; in the second he studies his relations to others in a wider environment (national-international); and in the third he studies that inquiry into the person-as-a-whole in his environment-as-a-whole which is called "literature."

In the first quarter, the major project, aside from a concerted campaign to help the student to become aware of how he observes, abstracts, and reports various types of "fact" and inference, is the writing of a fairly long autobiography. This is not the type of autobiography generally assigned in high school. It is analytical (almost psycho-analytical) and is based upon a long series of questions designed to reveal causes of speech or writing blockage or of social maladjustment.

We admit that this is dangerous business. In the hands of an unskilled teacher such an investigation can be disastrous. But in the hands of a skilled teacher it can be the highest type of education, designed to help the person adjust "intellectually" and "emotionally" to the kind of world and universe in which we think we live and will be living. Helping the student to perform that sort of adjustment is imperative for survival. In the university we are developing an adequate in-service teacher-clinician training program to assure "skilled" teaching in this and other aspects of our course.

It will be well to note some of the details of this autobiographical assignment. The student is informed that the autobiography will go into a locked file case and will be read only by the teacher and the clinician; but, as an added safe-



guard to the overcautious, numbers are assigned at random to all members of the class. These names and numbers are recorded by the teacher or clinician and are kept secret. A student may write his paper in two sections if he wishes, placing merely the number on the more intimate portion. These numbered papers are not filed in the personal file of the student but are filed all together so that the student is protected. We feel that, if the student will write out his emotional conflicts, his difficulties with mama-papa, or his so-called "sins," he will help rid himself of the blockage of fear which comes from inward festering. In the serious cases, we leave this aspect of the course to the psychiatrist. And we do everything in our power to avoid treating anyone as neurotic or abnormal.

When the autobiographical paper is first assigned, the student is told to make it legible but not to worry about matters of grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. In this way we secure a veritable mine of information to guide us in our teaching. By the help of the clinician, we can make a streamlined grammar course designed to remedy the student's own mistakes. We do no teaching of "bonehead" English at the University of Denver, and we use no standard grammar-drill books. We teach the student only the grammar which he needs to know, and we do it largely outside of class by means of student-clinician conferences.

During the second quarter, the main

project is the research paper. While it is being written, some class time is used on grammatical matters found to be the common need of the particular class. In the third quarter, the main project is a piece of creative writing done by the student and presented in some appropriate way by means of radio, stage, or publication. The university is planning to publish a "Journal of Communications," which will be, in part, an outlet for the best student writing.

At the University of Denver we teach individuals to help themselves. We do not teach texts. Thus we are faced with a serious problem in testing the results of our efforts. The tests do not exist which would test what we think we teach. The growth of the student, his adjustment to life, and his determination, if necessary, to adjust his environment as well as himself—these are what we are most interested in; and we must be constantly on guard, in developing our testing program, not to slip into mere testing of skills. That is a serious danger which would vitiate our entire aim and destroy that which makes our course distinctive.

Such, in brief, is the basic communications course which we are developing. All the objectives herein listed have not yet been fully achieved; some are perhaps visionary and will have to be modified; but we think that they point the general direction which training in communications needs to take.

## Report and Summary

### About Literature

WITH THE CULT OF FRANZ KAFKA ever spreading and deepening, an essay by Harry Slochower on "The Limitation of Franz Kafka" appears in the summer *American Scholar* as a salutary antidote. Starting with a brief summary of the growth, both abroad and in this country, of the interest in Kafka's writing, Slochower goes on to evaluate him in terms of his imaginative work, because, as he says, Kafka's "final significance must rest on the range, sensuousness and resonance of his art." Analyzing his writing from this point of view, Slochower finds that Kafka's limitation appears in the strict narrowness of his subject matter, the thinness of his characters, and a similar lack of sensuousness in his scenic situations. His conclusion is that, "measured by the aesthetic fullness which we associate with superior writing—the complex, rich interrelationships among characters, the manifold aspirations, passions, frustrations, the concrete form of their situation—Kafka's art appears scant and thin." For those to whom Kafka may still be new, a convenient way to get acquainted is to read the *Quarterly Review of Literature*, Vol. II, No. 3, the complete number of which is devoted to his work; also New Directions has recently issued *The Kafka Problem*, an anthology of criticism. Price, \$5.00.

NEW FRENCH WRITING OCCUPIES the complete issue of the spring *Partisan Review*, with a valuable essay on "French Literature since 1940," by Claude-Edmonde Magny, and translations of some recent poems and prose of Jean-Paul Sartre, Jean Genet, André Malraux, Albert Camus, Henri Michaux, and others.

THE *BRIARCLIFF QUARTERLY*, which began its career last year as an international review under the editorship of Norman Macleod, is maintaining excellent standards, and each number is well worth perusal. One of its most interesting departments is that entitled "Literary Intelligence," comprising letters from literary persons of various countries giving current information on the state of art and letters. The summer number contains a letter from Canada by John Sutherland, who reports a marked revival in Canadian writing and gives valuable evidence to prove it. A Mexican letter by Bartlett and Winters in the spring issue gives an excellent picture of the situation of the arts in Mexico, which is middling fair; and the same number also contains reports of "Poetry in Britain—1945," by Hardiman Scott, and "The English Theatre in 1945," by Neville Braybrooke. Scott says that "Parnassus has been in continual eruption," and the amount of poetry published in Britain, despite the paper shortage, has been prodigious; Braybrooke, that the English theater has never in its history been more moribund, yet never known such a boom in patronage. All these letters discuss individual writers in specific detail as well as outline movements and tendencies.

SOME OF OUR OWN INDIGENOUS literature is discussed by Charles I. Glicksburg in his "Negro Poets and the American Tradition" in the summer *Antioch Review*. In this he illustrates from numerous contemporary poems that Negroes suffer from an ambivalence of love and hate of America and that at present it seems to be the peculiar mission of Negro writers to give ex-

pression to their mixed feelings of love and hate when they treat of American themes. By making the promise of democracy come true, Glicksburg feels, we could make "racial consciousness" vanish like ghosts at the first flush of dawn. Then "Negro writers will become *American* writers." The poems he quotes, in themselves, make an interesting little anthology.

"BERNARD SHAW'S POLITICS" BY Eric Bentley appears in the summer *Kenyon Review*. This presents a valuable analysis and revaluation of Shaw's major works in relation to his politics. The keynote, perhaps, both to Bentley's point of view and to his conclusions, is to be found in his observation that "all Shaw's statements are 'slanted.' What he says is always determined by the thought: what can I do to this audience, not by the thought: what is the most objective statement about this subject." In the same issue there also appears a long portion of an extended study of Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Robert Penn Warren, who from time to time takes John Livingston Lowes somewhat to task.

THE NOVELS OF E. M. FORSTER ARE re-examined and evaluated by the young British critic, D. S. Savage, in the summer *Rocky Mountain Review*. Forster emerges as an Edwardian novelist of less importance and more dangerous significance than one might suppose from his present popular eminence.

SOME NEW PERIODICALS WHICH will interest teachers of college English have made their appearance recently. *Experiment*, a quarterly of new poetry, is issued at 725 St. Mary Street, New Orleans 13, Louisiana. Subscription, \$1.00 per year; \$0.30 per copy. The fall number is a memo-

rial issue devoted entirely to the poems of the late James Franklin Lewis. The *Hollywood Quarterly* "gives mature consideration to techniques and subject matter of motion pictures and the radio, and their social implications." Sponsored jointly by the University of California and the Hollywood Writers' Mobilization. Address: 351 Royce Hall, University of California, Los Angeles 24. Subscription price, \$4.00. The *Film Forum Review* is designed to give information and guidance to educators who make use of 16-mm. films and to help film-users develop workable criteria for film selection and increase educational effectiveness of the use of motion pictures. Published by the Institute of Adult Education, Teachers College, University of California, and the National Commission on Film Forums. The new quarterly *Journal of Education*, published by the University of Iowa, is intended to serve the instructors and administrators in secondary schools, junior colleges, teachers colleges, professional schools, and the liberal-arts colleges by informing them of the issues and experiments in general education. If successful, it may well help to provide that interlevel understanding of each other's problems which is so necessary if continuity in education is to be achieved. Address: Business Office, University Hall, Iowa City, Iowa. \$2.00 per year. The *Chicago Quarterly* is a literary magazine containing fiction, poems, and criticism, published by the University of Chicago, 203 Reynolds Building, Chicago 37, \$1.50 a year. *Viva*, edited by José García Villa, is a quarterly anthology devoting each issue to the consideration of an important living poet, the poet's new work, a symposium of appreciative and critical essays, etc. Illustrated with photographs. Edith Sitwell is the poet of the fall issue; Marianne Moore is scheduled to be the subject of the winter number. Distributed by New Directions, 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y.

### About Education

"AMERICA'S SCHOOLS FOR SLAVES," by Stringfellow Barr, appears in the August *Tomorrow*. "In this free land," says Barr, paradoxically enough, "schools and colleges are better adapted to train slaves than to educate free men." In fact, he continues, "they are so well adapted to train slaves that it is difficult to get the graduates to behave like free men." One of the methods we use, which, according to Barr, have produced this disheartening situation, is the deliberate sugar-coating of knowledge to "keep the student interested." This has created a public whose taste, therefore, has devastatingly contributed to the demoralization of our communications because it demands of our books, our radio programs, and our movies primarily a "reader interest." Our system of grading has resulted in grade-chasing on the campus, which in adult life produces a public interested in jobs with salaries rather than in competent work. Barr pleads for the use of methods that will graduate students who will think for themselves and will have a craftsman's respect for work.

DAN W. DODSON IN HIS "COLLEGE Quotas and American Democracy" is also concerned with the lack of democratic practices in our colleges and universities. He maintains that traditions in higher education in America are "rooted in the creation and perpetuation of an élite" and are identified only secondarily with "the struggle for human rights and the opportunity for all youth to develop their personalities to the fullest." He summarizes, with specific details, the discriminatory practices used against Jewish and Negro students, enumerates the various arguments used in the defense of such practices, points out the fallacies, and concludes that it is high time *all* institutions of higher learning open their doors to *all* young people, so that they may *all* "join hands in the great search for that new set of social relationships which will reveal the path of peace and light to a mankind groping and confused."

THAT OUR COLLEAGUES IN BRITAIN are concerned with many of the same problems in teaching English as are we is evident in an essay by S. S. Sopwith in the summer *English*, the magazine of the English Association, entitled "Some Observations on the Teaching of Literature." Professor Sopwith makes the point that "the English literature lesson is a lesson with a difference, and one that calls for a very special kind of effort from the teacher." He observes that at the secondary-school age the student is traveling daily farther away from the world of imagination that is his rightful possession, because he is in the midst of an intensive course of intellectual education, where he is memorizing facts, solving mathematical problems, learning grammar(!), and, then, suddenly he is asked to appreciate the indefinable significance of an ode of Keats. If the English teacher is to teach well, says Sopwith, he will not take the easy way of explaining the meaning of *hemlock*, *opiate*, *Lethe*, and *Dryad*, but will, instead, "try to interpret the Ode in such a way that some of the form feel something of its beauty, and remember their first discovery of it as they may remember all their lives the sudden revelation of a moonlit lake." For this reason, Sopwith thinks that, just as teachers are sometimes asked whether they are "prepared" to teach Divinity—that is, so convinced of the truth and necessity of their faith that they feel impelled to share that conviction—so the same sort of question should be put to all who intend to teach English literature. No one should be allowed to teach it "who has not that deep love of literature that demands expression in its interpretation."

ENGLISH TEACHERS OF BRAZIL, during the last two years, in an effort to raise their professional standards, have organized themselves into a whole series of regional associations. One of the chief aims of each association is to develop broader contacts with similar professional groups in other countries, particularly the United



States. Any one of them will be glad to act as a clearing-house for projects involving Brazilian-American collaboration in the field of foreign-language teaching. The presidents of each of the several associations are as follows: Paulo Cesar Machado da Silva, Instituto Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos, Rio de Janeiro; Dr. Ignácio Paraná, Centro Cultural Inter-Americano, Curitiba, Paraná; Hygino Aliandro, União Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos, São Paulo, S.P.; Antonio Francisco, Instituto de Educação Belo Horizonte, Minas Geraes; Manuel Peixoto, Associação Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos, Salvador, Bahia.

"WANTED: A NEW EDUCATIONAL Theatre," by Joe Zimmerman, in the *July Theatre Arts*, offers important suggestions to all who are interested in improving not only the standards of the college theater but also courses on drama and stage history. Zimmerman probes the inadequacies of existing college and university theaters as training schools for the professional theater and gives a blueprint for what he thinks is needed. Zimmerman would first make a sharp division between courses for the student who wants to know something of the theater as an art and cultural form and those for the student interested in the theater as a vocation. If either type of course is fully to serve its purpose, there must be a divorce between the concepts of professional theater training and liberal cultural development. The curricular plan of training for the theater profession which he outlines in detail includes three full years of intensive theater training, based upon either two or three years of pretheater liberal arts work. Were such a plan and various other suggestions made by Zimmerman to be adopted, a liberal-arts student could become familiar with the "cultural" aspects of the theater without being able to graduate with expectation of becoming a professional, and the person who did "graduate in the theatre" would have had a liberal-arts training along with a sound vocational one.

NEW FILMS WHICH SHOULD BE helpful are: "The Movement of the Tongue in Speech," a 16-mm. sound film in both color and black and white. Movements of the human tongue and lips are shown during the speech of a male patient, part of whose right cheek was removed by a surgical operation. Part I consists of five groups of isolated words chosen to illustrate the tongue movements during the pronunciation of vowel sounds; Part II, the movements for various consonants; Part III, successive sounds welded into a continuous chain (13 minutes). This can be rented from the British Information Services, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, for \$3.50. From the same agency can be obtained two new films composed of scenes from *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*. These were produced, it is said, as an experiment to discover whether there was a demand for Shakespeare on film. Hardy Finch reports them excellent. . . . *Rendezvous with Destiny* is the first of N.B.C.'s documentary recording series designed expressly for educational use. It presents the actual words and the familiar voice of Franklin Delano Roosevelt in excerpts from twenty-three of his most important radio addresses: two volumes; twelve 12-inch recordings; 78 r.p.m.; playing time, 2 hours; cost per set, \$16.50; discount on quantities. Address: N.B.C. Radio Recording Division, Department Y, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20.

WORK TOWARD THE COMPLETION of the *Middle English Dictionary* will be guided by its new editor, Hans Kurath, who succeeds the late Thomas S. Knott. The University of Michigan has reaffirmed its intention of supporting the project until it is finished.

TWENTY-FIVE A.A.U.W. FELLOWSHIPS for graduate study or research, each for \$1,500, are available for 1947-48. For detailed information write: Secretary, Committee on Fellowship Awards, American Association of University Women, 1643 I Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

## *A New Privilege*

ANY member of the National Council of Teachers of English can now secure Associate Membership for one year in the English Association (British) at the low fee of one dollar. For his dollar he will receive one of the three issues of *English*, the magazine published by the English Association; a copy of the year's Presidential Address, always by an eminent man; and the privilege of purchasing all other publications of the English Association at members' reduced prices. A list of these publications will be sent upon request made to the office of the National Council of Teachers of English, 211 West Sixty-eighth Street, Chicago 21. Applications and dollars should be sent to the same address.

Credit for arranging co-operation between the National Council and the English Association is due chiefly to Warner G. Rice of the University of Michigan, who made the first proposals, and Dr. Arundel Esdaille, who secured their acceptance. Professor Rice began the negotiations as chairman of the NCTE College Section and concluded them as a special liaison representative of the National Council.

The following explanation of the aims and activities of the English Association was supplied by the organization:

### THE ENGLISH ASSOCIATION

The English Association was founded in 1906. It is in no sense a professional body, for it welcomes to its membership all who are interested in the study of the English language and its literature, and seeks to spread as widely as possible the

enjoyment of the study. Among its members therefore will be found not only those who are recognized writers of distinction, but also beginners in the craft and those who merely read. The work of young members is particularly encouraged.

Each year some leading figure in modern letters is elected President and the important event of the season is the Presidential Address. This year's President is Arthur Bryant, the historian; he is to be succeeded in 1947 by Sir Osbert Sitwell. A programme of lectures is arranged, and much practical value is derived from educational conferences which discuss such vital subjects as the English syllabuses in school examinations.

The journal of the Association is *English*, which appears three times a year. A News Letter is devoted to current information on the Association's activities, details of lectures, and so on. Each year's Presidential Address is published in pamphlet form. The Association has also issued a number of anthologies. These have proved very popular and continue to be in enormous demand. The best known are probably the poetry collections in the "Poems of Today" series. A Literary Advice Panel has recently been established to give expert criticisms to writers at very reasonable fees, which services are in great demand.

This brief introduction can give only a very sketchy idea of the activities of a virile organization which has well survived the rigours of wartime and confidently looks forward to a widespread extension of its activities.

S. E. B.

# *Thirty-sixth Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English*

## *Program*

*Convention Hall, Atlantic City, New Jersey*

*November 28, 29, 30, 1946*

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CONVENTION THEME: "ENGLISH FOR THESE TIMES"

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### **THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28**

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION ON THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM, 9:00-12:00 A.M.

*(Pre-Convention Sessions of the Commission on Wednesday, November 27)*

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 12:30-2:00 P.M.

*(Pre-Convention Meeting of the Committee, Wednesday, November 27, 7:00-10:00 P.M.)*

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2:30-5:30 P.M.

*(All members of the Council are invited to attend this meeting)*

GENERAL SESSION, 8:00-10:00 P.M.

#### **THE CHALLENGE OF ENGLISH INSTRUCTION**

*Presiding, Ward H. Green, Tulsa, Oklahoma, First Vice-President of the Council*

*Greetings—John Bosshart, Commissioner of Education for New Jersey; Floyd C. Potter, Superintendent of Schools, Atlantic City*

*President's Address: English for These Times—Some Issues and Implications—Helene W. Hartley, Syracuse University (30 min.)*

*Implications of Modern Linguistic Science—Charles C. Fries, University of Michigan (30 min.)*

*It Is Earlier than You Think—Theodore Morrison, Harvard University (30 min.)*

### **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29**

GENERAL SESSION, 9:30-11:30 A.M.

#### **SOME PLANS AND PROPOSALS**

*Presiding, Harry A. Domincovich, Germantown Friends School, Philadelphia, Second Vice-President of the Council*

- Maximum Essentials in Composition—Porter G. Perrin, Colgate University (30 min.)  
 Critical Thinking through Instruction in English—Harold A. Anderson, University of Chicago (30 min.)  
 The Commission on the English Curriculum—Dora V. Smith, University of Minnesota, Director of the Commission (30 min.)

## LUNCHEON SESSIONS, 12:00-1:45 P.M.

1. *Books for Children: A Luncheon for Librarians and Elementary and Junior High School Teachers*

*Committee:* Lucy A. Lord, Massachusetts Avenue School, Atlantic City, New Jersey; Dorothy June Ferebee, Bronxville Elementary School, Bronxville, New York; Helen Mackintosh, Office of Education, Washington, D.C.; Letty VanDerveer, Public Library, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

*Presiding,* Lucy A. Lord, Massachusetts Avenue School, Atlantic City

*Address—*Frances Clarke Sayers, Superintendent of Work with Children, New York Public Library

Authors of books for children will be seated conveniently to meet teachers and librarians who attend and to discuss children's literature informally with them. A souvenir program bearing the list of authors present and the titles of their books will be distributed to luncheon, guests. Books of the authors will be on display. (Tickets, probably to cost \$2.75, on sale at the Registration Desk.)

2. *Committee on Articulation: An Open Meeting of the Committee to Which Are Invited All Who Wish To Discuss the Subject of Continuity in Language Growth through the Various Levels of Education*

*Presiding,* Amanda M. Ellis, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Chairman, Committee on Articulation

(Tickets, probably to cost \$2.75, on sale at the Registration Desk.)

3. *NAJD Luncheon Meeting for Members and Teachers Interested in School Publications*

(The Madison, Illinois Avenue, 12:30 P.M.)

Reservations, \$2.50, through chairmen: Margaret Blair, 731 N. Avenue, Pittsburgh 21, or Donald C. Wolfe, 443 Grove Street, Rahway, New Jersey.

## FRIDAY AFTERNOON CONFERENCES, 2:00-4:00 P.M.

## THE RESPONSE OF CLASSROOM AND LABORATORY

1. *For One World: Removing Barriers through English Teaching*

*Presiding,* John J. DeBoer, Roosevelt College, Chicago; Editor, *Elementary English Review*  
*Secretary,* Anne Bailey, Battin High School, Elizabeth, New Jersey

Your Student and the Atomic Enigma—Philip E. Kennedy, Senior High School, Oak Ridge, Tennessee (20 min.)

A Course in Internationalism for Senior High School—Robert U. Jameson, Haverford School, Haverford, Pennsylvania (10 min.)

Contemporary World Problems: A Tentative Approach—Mrs. N. V. Lindsay, Hillyer Junior College, Hartford, Connecticut (10 min.)



A High-School Project in Understanding—M. David Hoffman, Simon Gratz High School, Philadelphia (10 min.)

A Latin-American Club in High School—Nora B. Thompson, Lower Merion High School, Ardmore, Pennsylvania (10 min.)

The Orient in the Classroom—Elizabeth Seeger, Dalton School, New York City (10 min.)

Soviet Russia with Elementary Classes—Lenore McCullough, Thaddeus Stevens School, Philadelphia (10 min.)

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.): Lily M. Edelman, Educational Director, East and West Association, New York City; and others.

### 2. *For One Nation: Help through English Teaching*

*Presiding*, Merrill P. Paine, Director of English, Elizabeth, New Jersey

*Secretary*, Sister Mary Claretta, O.S.F., St. Hubert's High School for Girls, Philadelphia

Building One Nation through Children's Books—Charlemae Rollins, George C. Hall Branch, Chicago Public Library (20 min.)

One Freshman, One Class, One Nation—Elsa Chapin, Packer Collegiate Institute, Brooklyn, New York (20 min.)

Language and Human Relations—Wilfred Eberhart, Ohio State University (20 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each)*: Martin L. Gill, Jr., Radnor High School, Wayne, Pennsylvania; Alphonse Henningburg, Department of Welfare, New York City; Joseph Gallant, Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School, New York City

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

### 3. *Understanding Our American Heritage*

*Presiding*, Harry R. Warfel, Division of Cultural Co-operation, Department of State, Washington, D.C.

*Secretary*, Caswell E. MacGregor, Girard College, Philadelphia

The Training of High-School Teachers of American Literature—E. Sculley Bradley, University of Pennsylvania (20 min.)

The Training of College Teachers of American Literature—Willard C. Thorp, Princeton University (20 min.)

The Integration of American Studies: A Classroom Experience—George Robert Carlsen, University of Minnesota High School (20 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each)*: William G. Crane, City College of New York, Chairman of the Council's Committee on College Study of American Literature and Culture; Roy P. Basler, Peabody College, Chairman of the Council's College Section; Leon Mones, Principal, Cleveland Junior High School, Newark, New Jersey; Hanna Kirk Mathews, Swarthmore High School, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

### 4. *Improving Communication through Writing*

*Presiding*, Wesley Wiksell, Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri

*Secretary*, Eleanor Maurer, Hillside High School, Elizabeth, New Jersey

Writing in the Elementary Classes—Anne L. Worrell, Illman-Carter Unit, University of Pennsylvania (20 min.)

High-School Composition—Maxwell Nurnberg, Abraham Lincoln High School, New York City (20 min.)

The Rating of Composition for College Entrance—Edward S. Noyes, Yale University, Chairman of the College Entrance Examination Board (30 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* Mrs. Henrietta Tomlinson, Principal, Stow Creek Township School, Cumberland County, New Jersey; Rudolf Flesch, Author of *The Art of Plain Talk*; Maude Staudenmayer, Juneau High School, Milwaukee, President, National Association of Journalism Directors of Secondary Schools

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

#### 5. *Improving Communication through Speech*

*Presiding*, Harlen M. Adams, Chico Junior College, Chico, California, Chairman of the Council Committee on Speech

*Secretary*, Vesta M. Parsons, Bloomfield High School, Bloomfield, New Jersey

Extemporaneous Speaking in the English Class—Lauren L. Brink, University of Minnesota (20 min.)

College Courses in Communication—Glen E. Mills, Northwestern University (15 min.)

Oral Reading in English Class: Discussion and Demonstration—Evelyn Yellow Robe, Vassar College (25 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* Samuel R. Rosenbaum, Attorney-at-Law, Philadelphia, formerly Commanding Officer, Radio Luxembourg; Florence C. Guild, Shortridge High School, Indianapolis, Indiana; Marion S. Walker, Nutley High School, Nutley, New Jersey

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

#### 6. *Improving Communication through Ability To Read* (High-School and College Section)

*Presiding*, William S. Gray, University of Chicago, Chairman of the Council's Committee on Reading at the Secondary and College Levels

*Secretary*, Paul R. Sweitzer, Manhasset High School, Manhasset, New York

Developmental Reading in Junior High School—Wilburt R. Walters, William Penn Charter School, Philadelphia (20 min.)

Reading Procedures in Senior High School—Rosemary M. Green, Curriculum Office, Board of Education, Philadelphia (20 min.)

How the English Teacher Can Help the Retarded Reader—Ralph C. Preston, University of Pennsylvania (20 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* Bertha Handlan, University of Colorado; Charles R. Morris, Milton Academy, Milton, Massachusetts; Adelaide L. Cunningham, Commercial High School, Atlanta, Georgia; Gertrude B. Stearns, High School, Hinsdale, New Hampshire

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

#### 7. *Improving Communication through Ability To Read* (Elementary-School Section)

*Presiding*, Marjorie Hardy, Past President, Association for Childhood Education

*Secretary*, Martha Walklett, Gibbsborough School, Gibbsborough, New Jersey

The Place of the Classroom Teacher in Reading Adjustments—Helen Blair Sullivan, Boston University (20 min.)

Corrective and Remedial Cases: Diagnosis and Procedure—Emmett A. Betts, Temple University (20 min.)

Making the Printed Word Speak—Mildred March, Principal, John Ward School, Newton, Massachusetts (20 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* Lillian C. Paukner, Elementary Curriculum Supervisor, Milwaukee; John P. Milligan, Superintendent of Schools, Glen Ridge, New Jersey; Eloise Cason, Director of Clinical Reading, Bloomfield, New Jersey

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

#### 8. *Language Study and Communication*

*Presiding,* Thomas C. Pollock, New York University

*Secretary,* Edith Fletcher, Rutherford High School, Rutherford, New Jersey

Language Study in the Elementary School—Florence B. Bowden, Helping Teacher, Cumberland County, New Jersey (20 min.)

Language Study in the High School—Robert W. Rounds, Oneonta State Teachers College, Oneonta, New York (20 min.)

Language Study in College—Aileen Traver Kitchin, Teachers College, Columbia University (20 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* Blanche H. Dow, Northwest Missouri State Teachers College, Maryville, Missouri; Harrison L. Reinke, Principal, Fay School, Southborough, Massachusetts; Luella B. Cook, Minneapolis Public Schools, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

#### 9. *Fostering Individuality through Speaking and Writing*

*Presiding,* Belle McKenzie, West Seattle High School, Seattle, Washington

*Secretary,* Marie Bryan, University of Maryland

Speaking and Writing in the Elementary School—Julia Weber, Department of Public Instruction, Warren County, New Jersey, author of *My Country School Diary* (20 min.)

High-School Writing in Prose and Verse—Rosemary Denniston, Chatham Hall, Chatham, Virginia (20 min.)

Guiding the College Student—Esther M. Raushenbush, Sarah Lawrence College (20 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* George E. Murphy, Humboldt State College, Arcata, California; Ellen M. Geyer, University of Pittsburgh; Winifred H. Nash, Dorchester High School for Girls, Dorchester, Massachusetts

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

#### 10. *Values in the Modern World: Guiding Pupils to Moral Resources in Literature*

*Presiding,* Mark Neville, John Burroughs School, St. Louis, Missouri

*Secretary,* Reba Eaton, Passaic High School, Passaic, New Jersey

Developing Spiritual Values in Children—Sister M. Francis Loretto, S.S.J., Supervisor, Sisters of St. Joseph, Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia (20 min.)

Literature in Training the Emotions—Angela M. Broening, Forest Park High School, Baltimore, Maryland, Chairman of the Council's Committee on the Place of English in American Education (20 min.)

Literature Basic in Education—Denham Sutcliffe, Kenyon College (20 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* Sister M. Cornelia, S.L., Principal, St. Cronan's School, St. Louis, Missouri; Louise M. Rosenblatt, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, New York; J. Milton French, Rutgers University; Rodney A. Kimball, Oak Park High School, Oak Park, Illinois

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

11. *Values in the Modern World: Exploring Values in the Drama*

*Presiding,* Robert C. Pooley, University of Wisconsin

*Secretary,* Mabel R. Noyes, Nashua High School, Nashua, New Hampshire

A Modern Play out of *Aristophanes: A Class Project*—John F. Joyce, Senior High School, Leominster, Massachusetts (20 min.)

Demonstration Class in *Hamlet*—Taught by Irvin C. Poley, Germantown Friends School, Philadelphia, Chairman of the Council's High-School Section (45 min.)

(The class is made up of students from the upper grades of the Atlantic City High School)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* Mildred L. Grimes, Dana Hall, Wellesley, Massachusetts; Harold C. Wells, Montclair High School, Montclair, New Jersey; Joseph Mersand, Long Island City High School, Long Island City, New York; Marie Churchill, Public Schools, Portland, Oregon

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

12. *Values in the Modern World: Periodicals, Radio, and Television*

*Presiding,* Max J. Herzberg, Principal, Weequahic High School, Newark, New Jersey, Chairman of the Council's Committee on Radio

*Secretary,* Caroline L. Ziegler, Eastern High School, Baltimore, Maryland

The Changing Newspaper—Henry R. Suydam, Chief Editorial Writer, *Newark Evening News* (15 min.)

A Magazine Editor's Code—William A. H. Birnie, Editor, *Woman's Home Companion* (15 min.)

The Present Status of Television—Noran Kersta, Manager, Television Department, National Broadcasting Company (15 min.)

Educational Possibilities of Television—Sterling Fisher, Assistant Public Service Counselor, National Broadcasting Company (15 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* Kay M. Saunders, John Marshall High School, Rochester, New York; Caroline M. Doonan, Newton High School, Newton, Massachusetts; Regis Boyle, Eastern High School, Washington, D.C., Vice-President, National Association of Journalism Directors of Secondary Schools

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

13. *Values in the Modern World: Studying Motion Pictures and Other Audio-Visual Aids*

*Presiding,* Nathan A. Miller, Little River Junior High School, Miami, Florida, Chairman of the Council's Committee on Audio-Visual Aids

*Secretary,* Elizabeth Vance, Junior High School, Atlantic City

Have Education and the Movies Come Closer Together in the Past Half-Decade? Edgar Dale, Ohio State University (20 min.)



A Demonstration of Audio-Visual Aids, with Comment by Teachers Who Have Used Them in the Classroom

Question and Comment from the Floor

*Responding:* John J. Jenkins, Director of Audio-Visual Education, Bronxville Public Schools, Bronxville, New York; Hardy Finch, Greenwich High School, Greenwich, Connecticut; Edward G. Bernard, Office of Superintendent of Schools, New York City; Alexander B. Lewis, Central High School, Newark, New Jersey

#### 14. *English in the Education of Adults*

*Presiding,* Eason Monroe, Pennsylvania State College

*Secretary,* Frederick B. Rawson, Kimball Union Academy, Meriden, New Hampshire

New Outlook in Adult Education—Alain Locke, Howard University, President of the American Association for Adult Education (15 min.)

New Approaches to the Conquest of Illiteracy—Paul A. Witty, Northwestern University, Chairman of the Council's Committee on Illiteracy

High-School English for the Veteran—Iredell L. Aucott, Benjamin Franklin High School, Philadelphia (15 min.)

Adult Education and the World Scene—Gladys Wiggin, United States Office of Education (15 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* Everett C. Preston, Director of Adult Education, State of New Jersey; Ambrose Caliver, United States Office of Education; Herman M. Wessel, Principal, Elkins Park Junior High School, Elkins Park, Pennsylvania

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

#### 15. *Preparing Teachers of English for Our Times*

*Presiding,* Ida A. Jewett, Teachers College, Columbia University

*Secretary,* Sister Constance Mary, I.H.M., Little Flower High School, Philadelphia

A Training Program for Teachers of Communication Skills—John C. Gerber, State University of Iowa (20 min.)

Preparing the Teacher of Literature—Herbert E. Fowler, State Teachers College of Connecticut, New Britain (20 min.)

A Language Arts Program for Elementary-School Teachers—Marian Emory Shea, New Jersey State Teachers College, Newark (20 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* Miriam B. Booth, Supervisor of Secondary School English, Erie, Pennsylvania, Chairman of the Council's Committee on Supervision; Jessie Boutillier, Central Commercial and Technical High School, Newark, New Jersey; Blanche Trezevant, Supervisor, English and Language Arts, State of Louisiana

Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

#### 16. *Current Research in the Teaching of English*

*Presiding,* J. Conrad Seegers, Associate Dean, Teachers College, Temple University

*Secretary,* Don S. Hitchner, East Orange High School, East Orange, New Jersey

Research in Language for the Teacher of English—Lou LaBrant, New York University (20 min.)

Signs, Symbols, and Teachers of English—Lennox Grey, Teachers College, Columbia University (20 min.)

Some Results of a Twelve-Year Study of Children's Reading Preferences—George W. Norvell, Supervisor of English, University of the State of New York (20 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* Dana O. Jensen, Dean, Washington University, St. Louis; Ernest A. Choate, Principal, Fittler School, Philadelphia; M. R. Trabue, Dean, School of Education, Pennsylvania State College; Grace A. Benscoter, Emerson School, Gary, Indiana  
Question and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

17. *Does Reading Tire You? Laboratory Report, Illustrated with Technicolor Film*

*Presiding,* W. Wilbur Hatfield, Secretary-Treasurer of the Council

*Secretary,* Crosby E. Redman, Haverford School, Haverford, Pennsylvania

Educational Implications of a Three-Year Study of Eye Fatigue—Leonard Carmichael, President of Tufts College, Director of the Tufts Laboratory of Sensory Psychology (50 min.)

*Discussion (5 min. each):* A. B. Herr, The Reading Clinic, New York University; Sister Mary Louise, S.L., Webster College, Webster Groves, Missouri; Marion C. Sheridan, New Haven High School, New Haven, Connecticut; Evelyn I. Banning, Watertown High School, Watertown, Massachusetts

Questions and Comment from the Floor (30 min.)

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING, 4:15 P.M.

*(All members of the Council are urged to attend this meeting)*

EVENING INTERLUDE—MUSIC, DRAMA, POETRY, 8:00 P.M.

*(Auditorium, Convention Hall)*

"Ballad for Americans"—Atlantic City Choral Club and Orchestra

How a Poet Works—Robert P. Tristram Coffin

Seeing Things—John Mason Brown, Author, Lecturer, Dramatic Critic

Light refreshments and social hour

MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 10:00-11:00 P.M.

*(All members of the Council are invited to attend this meeting)*

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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30

SECTION MEETINGS, 9:00-11:30 A.M.

1. *Elementary Section*

*Presiding,* Dora V. Smith, University of Minnesota, Chairman of Elementary Section of the Council

*Secretary,* Grace Rawlings, Principal, Elementary School 64, Baltimore, Maryland

Children's Contributions to Elementary-School General Discussion—Harold V. Baker, Principal, Elementary School, New Rochelle, New York (25 min.)

All Good Books Have Value Significance for Children—Helen Ferris, Editor, Junior Literary Guild (25 min.)

Creative Writing and the Development of Personality—John J. DeBoer, Roosevelt College, Chicago; Editor, *Elementary English Review* (25 min.)

*Discussion* (5 min. each): Althea Beery, Supervisor of Language Arts, Cincinnati, Ohio; J. Conrad Seeyees, Associate Dean, Teachers College, Temple University; Ellen Frogner, Chicago Teachers College

Question and Comment from the Floor (15 min.)

Section Business Session

## 2. High-School Section

### "ENGLISH FOR GROWTH IN PERSONALITY"

*Presiding*, Irvin C. Poley, Germantown Friends School, Philadelphia, Chairman of the High-School Section of the Council

*Secretary*, Joan Masterson, Great Neck High School, Great Neck, New York

Indoctrinating for the Democratic Way of Life—George W. Sullivan, Jr., Long Island City High School, Long Island City, New York (20 min.)

Reclaiming the Slow-learning Boys and Girls—Esther Agnew Robinson, Oklahoma City Schools, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (20 min.)

Developing Personality through Literature—Sarah I. Roody, Nyack High School, Nyack, New York (20 min.)

Developing Personality through Communication—Marcella R. Lawler, High School Supervisor, Olympia, Washington (20 min.)

*Discussion* (5 min. each): George H. Henry, Principal, High School, Dover, Delaware; Eugene E. Seubert, Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri; Edward J. Gordon, Newton High School; Newton, Massachusetts; George E. Salt, New Jersey State Teachers College, Montclair

Question and Comment from the Floor (15 min.)

Section Business Session

## 3. College Section

### "WORLD LITERATURE FOR CITIZENS OF ONE WORLD"

*Presiding*, Roy P. Basler, Peabody College, Chairman of the College Section of the Council

*Secretary*, Rudolf Kirk, Rutgers University

The Literary Scholar in These Times—Hoxie Neale Fairchild, Hunter College (25 min.)

The Place of World Literature in the College Program—Philo M. Buck, Jr., University of Wisconsin (25 min.)

Education for World Outlook—Hon. Herbert F. Goodrich, Judge, U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, Philadelphia (25 min.)

*Discussion* (5 min. each): Louise M. Rosenblatt, Brooklyn College; George W. Parks, Queens College; Edwin S. Fulcomer, New Jersey State Teachers College, Montclair; William T. Beauchamp, Knox College

Question and Comment from the Floor (15 min.)

Section Business Session

## ANNUAL LUNCHEON, 12:15-3:00 P.M.

*Presiding*, Helene W. Hartley, President of the Council

Music—Atlantic City High School Instrumental Trio

Invocation

Address: American Literature and Democratic Tradition—Howard Fast, Novelist and Biographer

The Pursuit of Peace—Edward R. Murrow, Vice-President, Columbia Broadcasting System; Analyst of World Affairs

*Presentation of NCTE Radio Award*:—Max Herzberg, Chairman, Council's Committee on Radio

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 4:00-6:00 AND 8:00-10:00 P.M.

★

## FIVE YEARS OF VISUAL AIDS FOR ENGLISH

A continuous showing by makers of material: Thursday, November 28, 12 noon to 8:50 P.M.; Friday, November 29, 12 noon to 8:50 P.M.; Saturday, November 30, 9:00 A.M. to 1:50 P.M.

*Exhibitors*: Bell and Howell Company, Brandon Films, British Information Services, Coronet Instructional Films, Curriculum Films, Inc., Encyclopaedia Britannica Films Inc., Nu-Art Films Inc., Pictorial Films Inc., Popular Science, Teaching Film Custodians, Young America Films Inc.

## MONSTROUS ARTIFICE

ANDERSON M. SCRUGGS<sup>1</sup>

Not for the horrors of hell  
Is war incredible.

Death is no fearsome thing  
When the pulses leap and sing

With a gun making geysers of dust  
On a hill far away—with the thrust

Of a tank as it seeks out its foes,  
Contemptuous of trees as it goes.

A man can sink a ship  
With a song upon his lip

Or blast a town apart  
With a poem in his heart;

There is a glory in a gun  
As it turns its wrath upon

A bomber diving down  
On a battleship or town—

In machine guns and their prattle  
As they stitch the seams of battle.

The incredible is this:  
That the monstrous artifice

Of a war could make men move  
From the valleys of their love,

Giving up the close delights  
Of their soft and secret nights,

The quickened breath, the long caress,  
For the stark unnaturalness

Of a desert or a sea,  
Where the metal harlotry

Of a sterile world of steel  
Is all the flesh their hands may feel . . . .

Not for pain and not for grief  
Are wars of men past all belief.

<sup>1</sup> Professor of Histology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. Author of a book of poems *Ritual for Myself* (Macmillan, 1941).



## Books

### RADIO LITERATURE<sup>1</sup>

In the twenty-six years that encompass the entire history of broadcasting, radio drama has been shaped by the skilful fingers of the advertising agencies into a smooth, servile, and thoroughly stereotyped instrument of entertainment. Archibald MacLeish, in his disappointment, has dismissed it as a "vaudeville of the air."

Almost imperceptibly, however, a radio literature has arisen—usually on unsponsored programs—that has used the power of the spoken word to push back, as Erik Barnouw puts it in his Foreword, "the horizons of public knowledge and understanding." *Radio Drama in Action* is a collection of twenty-five such scripts. Here radio drama does not tickle its audience, but probes deeply and sometimes uncomfortably into the public conscience, challenging listeners to think and to act. Pearl Buck writes on China, Morton Wishengrad on the Warsaw massacre, William Robson on the Detroit race riots, Arthur Laurents on the disabled veteran, Stephen Vincent Benét on the Nativity, Norman Rosten on the Red Army, Norman Corwin on the heroism of the English, Millard Lampell on the death of Lincoln, Roi Ottley on the Negro domestic, Arch Oboler on intolerance. English teachers will no doubt be gratified to discover how frequently these radio writers have turned to poetry for its compression and force.

Workshops have already used these scripts for amateur radio productions. Libraries will want the collection for reference. And teachers will find these plays and Barnouw's valuable background and biographical notes excellent material for the study of radio drama as a distinct literary form.

MILTON A. KAPLAN

STRAUBENMÜLLER TEXTILE HIGH SCHOOL  
NEW YORK

<sup>1</sup> Erik Barnouw (ed.), *Radio Drama in Action*. New York: Rinehart, 1945.

### FACTS AND JUDGMENTS<sup>1</sup>

*Facts and Judgments* is another book of rhetoric and readings for the freshman course. It is distinguished from many texts of the same general type, however, by its singleness of purpose. The readings have been chosen, not for literary excellence or importance of thought, but for their value in illustrating the principles discussed in the first half of the volume. The rhetoric ignores the conventional treatment of diction, sentence, and paragraph in order to concentrate on the substance and organization of whole essays. Within these limits the text could be used effectively. The two parts are well integrated: exercises in the section on techniques often refer to the illustrative selections, and the exercises following each of the readings call for analysis on the basis of propositions presented earlier. The greatest virtue of the book is the thoroughness and clarity with which Professor Cerveny gives instructions for certain specific types of writing such as directions, summaries, descriptions, reports, narrations, discussions, and research papers. It is here that he fulfils what he calls his first aim: "to free college teachers of English composition from some of the burden of explaining how to write."

On the other hand, the "new approach" referred to in the title hardly deserves the emphasis given to it. It insists on the necessity for recognizing that the materials of thought and writing are of two discrete classes—facts and judgments—and that there is an important difference between "informative essays," communicating facts, and "thematic essays," communicating judgments. The distinction is, of course, not without value; the question is whether it is central enough to be allowed to determine the pattern of a course or a textbook. It is doubtful that such a theoretical basis will

<sup>1</sup> George R. Cerveny, *Facts and Judgments: A New Approach to College Writing*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1946. Pp. xvi+456. \$2.00.

greatly aid in making composition less mysterious to the student or easier for the instructor to explain. Certainly, it imposes an arbitrary restriction upon the treatment of the subject and causes the author to neglect other problems of equal significance.

Only once does the book escape from the

limitations of its special viewpoint. That is in the chapter "On Communicating Meaning," which contains an elementary discussion of semantics.

H. BUNKER WRIGHT

MIAMI UNIVERSITY  
OXFORD, OHIO

## In Brief Review

[Mention under this head does not preclude review elsewhere.]

### FOR THE GENERAL READER

*Chloe Marr.* By A. A. MILNE. Dutton. Pp. 314. \$2.75.

A portrait of an elegant, desirable, elusive modern young woman. Most of the men of fashion in London were in love with her. Nothing was known of her past; she was a different Chloe to each of her friends. We know her only through what they say of her. She remains inscrutable and lovely to the end. Clever, subtle—entertaining.

*The Dark Wood.* By CHRISTINE WESTON. Scribner. Pp. 303.

Literary Guild selection, by the author of *Indigo*. Stella Harmon, whose brief marriage was very happy, is notified of the death of her soldier-husband. Colonel Mark Bycroft eagerly rejoins his wife only to find she loves another man. A study in psychological readjustment.

*Animal Farm.* By GEORGE ORWELL. Harcourt. Pp. 118. \$1.75.

A satire on Russian communism by a prominent member of the British Labour (socialist) party. The animals, led by the pigs, drive the human beings from the farm because they are exploiters. The pig rulers assume more and more power and take more and more privileges until their subjects cannot distinguish them from men. Incidents take off the Russian purges, the expulsion of Trotsky, etc. Even the politically indifferent find the fable vividly imagined and entertaining.

*There Were Two Pirates.* By JAMES BRANCH CABELL. Farrar & Straus. \$3.00.

A short, fanciful tale of an eighteenth-century pirate who tells his own bloody, ironic story of a campaign to win a lady's hand. J. B. C. is himself again.

*Company of Adventurers.* By LOUISE HALL THARP. Little, Brown. \$2.50.

Written for juniors, this superbly illustrated history of the Hudson Bay Company will appeal to many adult readers as well.

*Double Wedding Ring.* By JOSEPHINE LAWRENCE. Appleton. \$2.75.

Readers familiar with the author's treatment of real-life situations will be interested in this study of a family suffering from postwar tensions.

*Man and Shadow: An Allegory.* By ALFRED KREYMBORG. Dutton. Pp. 256. \$5.00.

The action takes place in a single day as the poet wanders in Central Park, New York. The problems of mankind are woven into a pattern of retrospect. There are the man and his shadow—also the shadow of humanity and of the ages. Individual, lilting, artistic, profound.

*Their Ancient Grudge.* By HARRY HARRISON KROLL. Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.50.

A novel based on the famous Hatfield-McCoy feud. The story is in part concerned with four women whose lives are shadowed by murder and revenge.

*Henry Adams and His Friends.* By HAROLD DEAN CARTER. Houghton. \$4.50.

A new collection of Henry Adams' letters, which throws fresh light upon the shrewd appraisals of people, science, and international relations which he made over eighty years ago.

*Escape in Passion.* By JULES ROMAINS. Knopf. \$3.50.

Another volume of the "Good Will Series." It deals with postwar disillusionment and a resultant abnormal interest in sex.

*The Best of Don Marquis.* By DON MARQUIS. Doubleday. \$3.00.

Extracts from *archy and mehitabel*, *The Old Soak*, stories, prefaces, and verse.

*To the Queen's Taste.* Edited by ELLERY QUEEN. Little, Brown. \$3.00.

A collection of superdetective stories by popular writers. Good.

*The Portable Thomas Wolfe.* Edited by MAXWELL GEISMAR. Viking. Pp. 712. \$2.00.

Including passages from Wolfe's four great novels, integrated into a continuous work. Also *The Story of a Novel* and six short stories.

*Thoreau's Walden: A Photographic Register.* By HENRY BUGBEE KANE. Knopf. \$4.00.

Introduction, Brooks Atkinson; Preface, H. B. Kane. These beautiful photographs of Walden as Thoreau saw and loved it (in spite of changes, much of the charm of woods and winter and birds remains) re-create Thoreau and his spirit for us. Each picture is preceded by a short quotation from Thoreau—e.g.: "Simplify, simplify. . . . The nation itself, with all its so-called internal improvements, which, by the way, are all external and superficial, is . . . an unwieldy and overgrown establishment . . . ruined by luxury and heedless expense . . . and the only cure for it . . . is in rigid economy, a stern and more Spartan simplicity of life and elevation of purpose." End maps.

*The Rocky Mountain Reader.* Edited by RAY B. WEST, JR. Dutton. \$3.50.

Thirty-eight stories, poems, essays, and excerpts from books. An illuminating introduction by the editor, founder of the *Rocky Mountain Review*. Vardis Fisher, Bernard De Voto, Maurine Whipple, Wallace Stegner, Lew Saret, Clyde Brion Davis, Whit Burnett, and many others are represented. In the Appendix are articles on regionalism, writers in the Rockies, Mormon story-tellers, etc. A fine collection.

*Jonathan Draws the Long Bow.* By RICHARD M. DORSON. Harvard University Press. Pp. 274. \$4.50.

The author's aim has been to "locate, arrange, and present New England folk tales lodged in print." In the first chapter he points out Old World influence and calls attention to a marked difference from those earlier cultures. There are chapters, with sample excerpts, on supernatural stories, Yankee yarns, tall tales, local legends, and literary folk tales.

*Pheasant Hunting.* By JOHN HIGHTOWER. Knopf. Pp. 227. \$4.00.

Color plates from paintings and line drawings by Lynn Bogue Hunt. Dedicated to the conservation departments. Written for the sportsman, for the boy hunting in his father's cornfields, and for the general reader. A direct, friendly style.

*The Great Prisoners: The First Anthology of Literature Written in Prison.* Selected and edited by ISIDORE ABRAMOWITZ. Dutton. Pp. 879. \$4.95.

Quotations from the writings of sixty-five prisoners—Socrates to Gandhi—with a brief explanation of the circumstances. Most of the prisoners were religious or political rebels, and the author says that justice is the theme of his book.

*The Salem Frigate.* By JOHN JENNINGS. Doubleday. \$3.00.

Tom Tisdall, student doctor, married the wrong girl, and to escape her became ship's surgeon on the "Essex." For fourteen years (1800's) he lived an adventurous life which covered naval battles, jaunts across the Sahara, etc. A colorful sea story with historical background—and women. End maps.

*The French-Canadian Outlook.* By MASON WADE. Viking. \$2.50.

The history of the French in Canada should be of interest to us. The French, who are one-third of the population, are loyal to their own traditions, and that fact does not make for a united Canadian nation.

*A Cartoon History, 1931-1945: Years of Wrath.* By DAVID LOW. Text by QUINCY HOWE. Simon & Schuster. \$3.75.

The Chinese have a proverb, "A picture tells more than a thousand words." These three hundred cartoons offer a commentary on the period as a whole. Low saw what was happening and what would happen; he was brave enough to foretell future tragedies. Howe, in a running text, gives a factual background for each cartoon.

*Theme and Variations.* By BRUNO WALTER. Translated by J. A. GALSTON. Knopf. \$5.00.

At seventy the author felt an urge to evaluate his life, weigh its meanings. His book not only records his memories and achievements and comments on notable people he has known; it contains a message. "I have preserved the unshaken conviction that man's spiritual accomplishments are vastly more important than his political and historical achievements."

*While Time Remains.* By LELAND STOWE. Knopf. Pp. 379. \$3.50.

By the author of *They Shall Not Sleep* and *No Other Road to Freedom*, who for twenty years has been a foreign correspondent. Stowe discusses the shape of things present; Soviet power; the situation in western Europe and Asia; and fascism, communism, and democracy and the atomic-bomb policy. He writes with desperate earnestness of what we must do while yet there is time.

*How To Pick a Mate.* By CLIFFORD R. ADAMS and VANCE O. PACKARD. Dutton. Pp. 215. \$2.75.

All the wisdom of a veteran marriage counselor addressed to college-age youth not yet engaged. Scientific and worldly wise, not moralistic or romantic. Includes a ten-trait personality analysis.

*Driftwood Valley.* By THEODORA C. STANWELL-FLETCHER. Atlantic-Little, Brown. Pp. 384. \$4.00.

Two young people were sent on a scientific mission to a remote spot in British Columbia to study

the distribution of northern animal species for a Canadian museum. Two hundred miles from a railroad or telephone they built a cabin and spent two years. Adventure and solitude appealed to them. Good reading. Excellent animal sketches by John F. Stanwell-Fletcher.

*Our Son, Pablo.* By ALVIN and DARLEY GORDON. Whittlesey House. Pp. 235. \$2.75.

The authors (Papa and Mama) were filming a documentary movie in Mexico, and Pablo was their guide and counselor. Pablo was an unusual boy for any culture to produce. Impressed by his ambitions for his country, the Gordons arranged for him to come to the United States, share their home, and enrol at the University of California. This involved tutors and much red tape. Pablo's experiences in the United States, his return to Mexico, and the Gordons' satisfaction when they visited him there make a fine good-neighbor story.

*Six Curtains for Natasha.* By CARYL BRAHMS and S. J. SIMON. Lippincott. \$2.50.

Natasha longed for the curtain to rise six times in response to the audience's enthusiastic applause to her dancing. A wacky story of a Russian family and a company of madcaps.

*O. Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories of 1946.* Selected and edited by HERSHEL BRICKELL, assisted by MURIEL FULLER. Doubleday. \$2.50.

The prize story is a tragic, ironical treatment of madness, an ominous view of a patient in a mental institution. Two other stories deal with madness. There are a few well-known writers, but many are new. *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Yale Review*, *Kenyon Review*, and the *New Yorker* are well represented.

*The Conquest of the Missouri: Being the Story of the Life and Exploits of Captain Grant Marsh.* By JOSEPH MILLS HANSON. "Murray Hill Books." Rinehart. Pp. 458. \$3.50.

Captain Marsh, great river pilot, saw the opening of the Northwest and helped survey the Upper Missouri. Maps and illustrations. First edition, 1909.

*The Lost Americans.* By FRANK C. HIBBEN. Crowell. \$2.50.

The story of the people who lived in our western plains during the ice age. How the first evidences were found and what traces were left by the Folsom and Sandia men. Exciting. Illustrated.

#### FOR THE TEACHER

*Problems in the Improvement of Reading.* By CONSTANCE McCULLOUGH, RUTH STRANG, and ARTHUR TRAXLER. McGraw-Hill. Pp. 406. \$3.50.

Although designed primarily to help teachers and administrators with the reading problems they en-

counter in their schools, both college and secondary, this volume should be helpful also to interested parents and to individuals anxious to improve their own reading. It is organized on a problem basis, treats of technical matters clearly and simply, contains a valuable bibliography at the end of each chapter, and is blessed with two good indexes, both subject and person. Should prove most useful.

*The American High School. Eighth Year Book of the John Dewey Society.* Harper. Pp. 264. \$3.00.

Important reading for college as well as high-school teachers if we are to work together effectively in constructing a better articulated program between secondary and college education. The status and needs of American youth are analyzed, as are the high schools' responsibilities and opportunities. The chapters on the changing curriculum, the curriculum proposals for the immediate future, and the provisions for vocational education are especially significant.

*Essays on the Eighteenth Century: Presented to David Nichol Smith in Honour of His Seventieth Birthday.* Oxford: Clarendon Press. Pp. 288. \$6.50.

A beautifully designed and printed book, obviously the labor of love of distinguished scholars, American as well as English, to honor a great English scholar whose special knowledge is the eighteenth century.

*The Golden Book of Catholic Poetry.* Edited by ALFRED NOYES. Lippincott. Pp. 440. \$3.50.

A new anthology, edited by a contemporary Catholic poet, comprising, for the most part, poems written by Catholics from the time of Chaucer to the present day, with a few written by non-Catholics, including Henry Adams' interesting but little-known "The Virgin of Chartres."

*Granger's Index to Poetry and Recitations.* Columbia University Press, 1945. Pp. 415.

This is a supplement (1938-44) to be used with the second revised edition of Granger published in 1944.

*Foundations of English for Foreign Students.* By HUGH R. WALPOLE. University of Chicago Press. Pp. 55. \$1.00. (Planographed.)

Designed for highly educated intelligent foreign adult students who wish to work intensively on essentials of English grammar and structure either with or without a teacher. The readings, models, and practice exercises are based upon work done with classes of foreign students at International House in Chicago.

*The French Touch.* By JOSEPH FIELDS and JEROME CHODOROV.

*The Late George Apley.* By JOHN P. MARQUAND and GEORGE S. KAUFMAN. Dramatists Play Service, Inc. Each, \$0.75.



*Little Wonder: The "Reader's Digest" and How It Grew.* By JOHN BAINBRIDGE. Reynal & Hitchcock. Pp. 177. \$2.00.

A reprint of the six-installment study of the *Digest* which appeared in the "Profiles" of the *New Yorker* last fall. Bainbridge sees the *Digest* from the angle of a liberal of the Roosevelt stripe, and the spectacle rouses him to caustic mirth and open condemnation. Here are more facts than in any other published discussion or report on the topic. The reader's acceptance or rejection of Bainbridge's interpretation will probably depend upon his own biases.

*Influence of Certain Personal Factors on a Speech Judgment.* By BERNARD CARP. Little Print, New Rochelle, N.Y., 1945. Pp. 122. Paper, \$1.75; cloth, \$2.50.

Carp here investigates the problem as to whether or not certain personal factors of an individual need to affect significantly a judge's rating of his audible speech. Concludes that they need not and that the really subjective element in a speech-testing situation is the judge, who may have a bias.

#### FOR THE STUDENT

*Giving Form to Ideas.* Edited by EGBERT S. OLIVER. Odyssey Press. Pp. 619. \$2.50.

A college reader which appears more original than many. The title is a good index to the approach. Competence in writing is the fundamental objective, but the focus is upon articulate communication of clearly formed ideas. The selections are wide in range, some contemporary, but not all; some American, but not all. Most of them are much shorter than those which usually appear in such textbooks. Some were written by nonliterary persons for nonliterary purposes. All are examples of distinctive writing which should catch the interest of the student as well as make the necessary pedagogic points. The study suggestions at the end of each chapter are interesting and aim to develop skill in reading and thinking as well as writing. The book is clearly printed and handy enough in size to be carried comfortably. Ought to be sufficiently stimulating but not too formidable in bridging helpfully the gap between high-school and college English.

*Vocabulary Builder Packet.* Compiled by EDWARD JONES KILDUFF and J. HAROLD JANIS. Crofts. \$1.00.

The *Packet* consists of a pocket folder containing twenty-five loose-leaf vocabulary exercises related to a series of fourteen lecture topics, all an outgrowth of the authors' experience in teaching vocabulary building at New York University. Included also are some materials provided by publishers of dictionaries for college students.

*The Modern Omnibus.* Edited by FRANKLIN P. ROLFE, WILLIAM H. DAVENPORT, and PAUL BOWERMAN. Harcourt. Pp. 1071. \$3.00.

The essay, biography, short story, drama, and poetry have each a section devoted to their genre, and each section is prefaced by an essay discussing both the genre and the section. The selections are almost entirely from immediately contemporary American writing. The section concerning the essay can be obtained in a separate volume entitled *Modern Exposition* (pp. 400; \$1.75).

*A Workbook for College Composition.* By GEORGE C. HARWELL. Crofts. 3d ed. Pp. 170. \$1.00.

Seventy-five exercises in the mechanics of writing. At end of each there are page references to each of fifteen handbooks wherein are discussed the principles involved in the exercise.

*A Dictionary of Word Origins.* By JOSEPH T. SHIPLEY. Philosophical Library (15 East Fortieth St., New York 16). Pp. 430. \$5.00.

An immense amount of erudition presented informally and often whimsically. It will not replace a standard etymological dictionary in the library; it may interest in etymology and semantics some not too systematic or deadly serious students. Many of its word histories go much beyond the usual formal information.

#### REPRINTS

*The Great Gatsby.* By F. SCOTT FITZGERALD. Bantam Books.

*Orlando: A Biography.* By VIRGINIA WOOLF. Penguin Books, Inc.

*An Enemy of the People: Antisemitism.* By JAMES PARKES. Penguin Books, Inc. Each, \$0.25.

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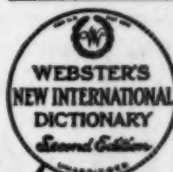
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